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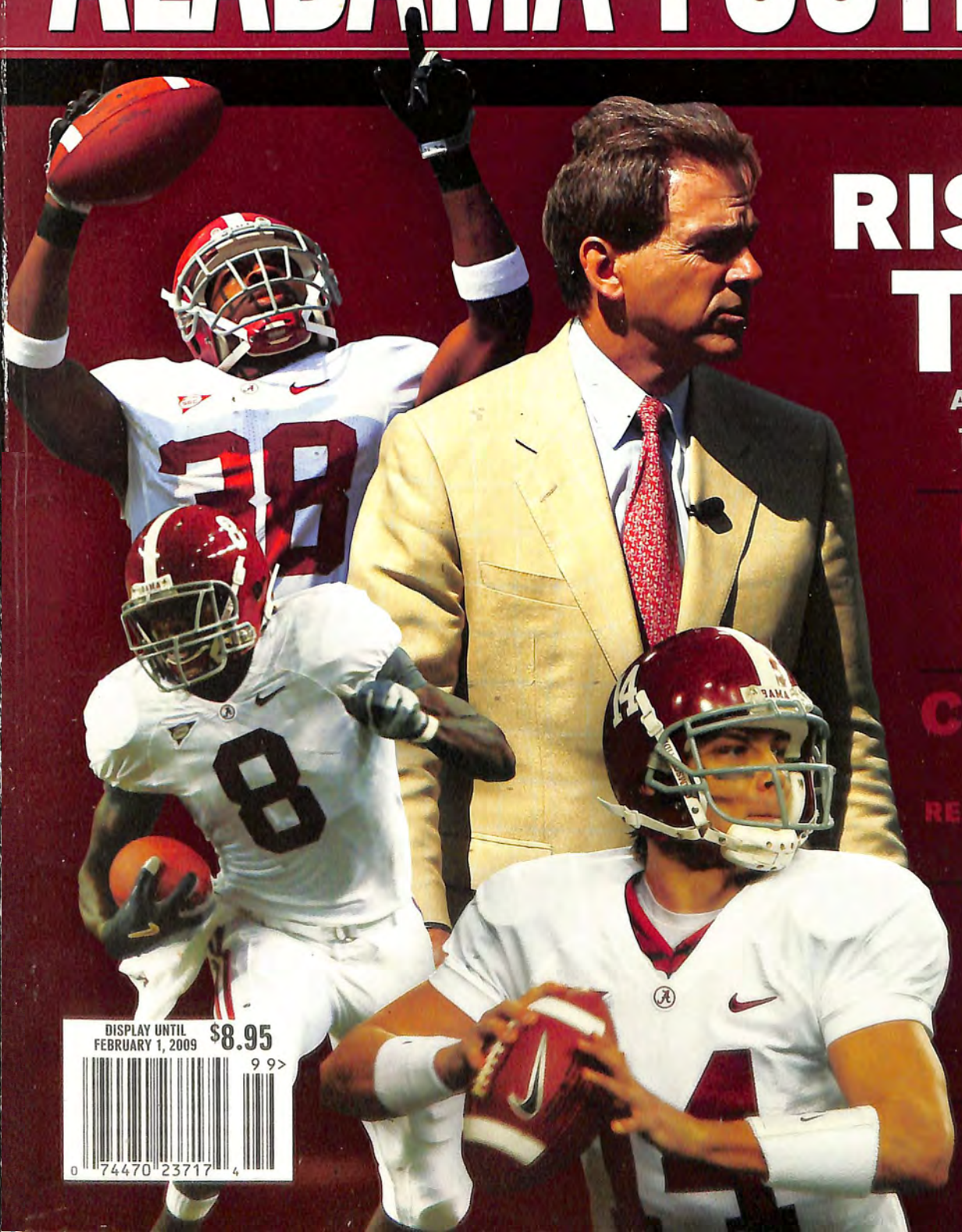

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CONTENTS

04 RISING TIDE

Detailing the Alabama Crimson Tide's perfect 12-0 regular season, remarkable run to No. 1, SEC Western Division championship – and how the future looks for even more.

10 ATLANTA-BOUND, AND BACK AGAIN

The Crimson Tide started the 2008 season as underdogs against Clemson in the Georgia Dome – and ended it a whisker away from the BCS title game at the SEC Championship Game.

16 FINALLY, ALABAMA

Although the current economic downturn has effected every facet of America, the Alabama Nation has turned out in full force – and large dollars – to bathe itself in Crimson and White.

18 ALABAMA 36, AUBURN 0

All of the Crimson Tide's 2008 accomplishments would have meant nothing should the Iron Bowl not go Alabama's way. But it did – and kept going all the way to multiple Rammer Jammers.

76 THE 2008 ALABAMA CRIMSON TIDE

From No. 1 to No. 99, the entire 2008 Alabama Crimson Tide in one place –a team photo to remember and a team that Tide fans will never forget.

78 BY THE NUMBERS

The complete statistical breakdown of every facet of the 2008 Alabama Crimson Tide – both individual numbers, defensive numbers and the team numbers.

80 WASSON SAYS...

How did we get here? How did Alabama go from national laughingstock, the edge of the NCAA's cliff and Auburn punching bag to national dominance? Saban. That's how.

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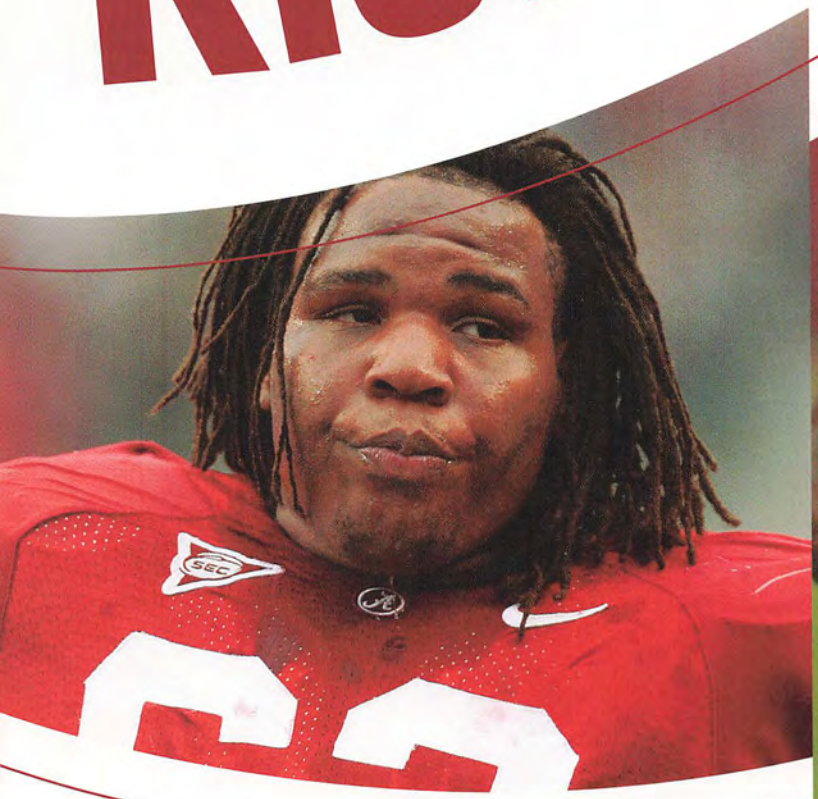
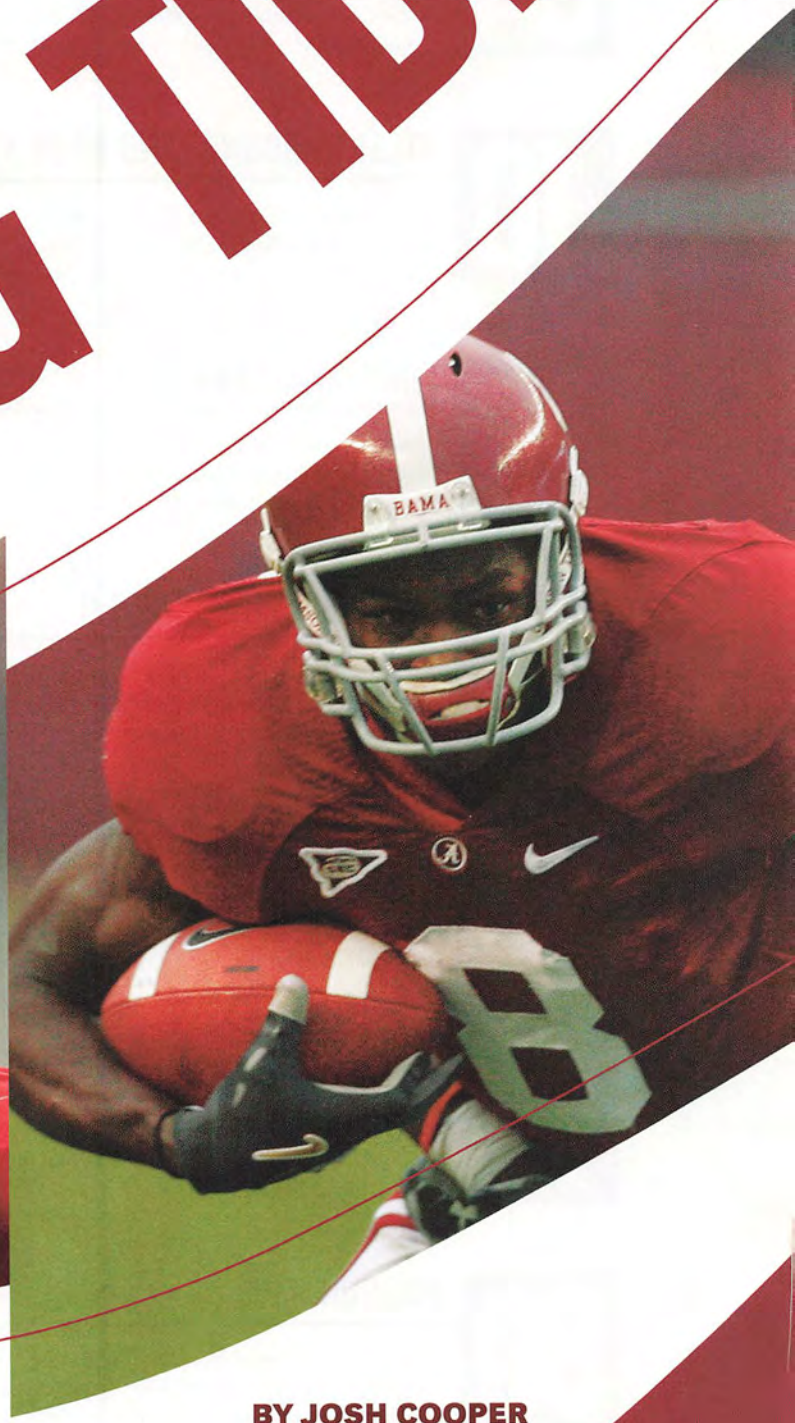
RISING TIDE





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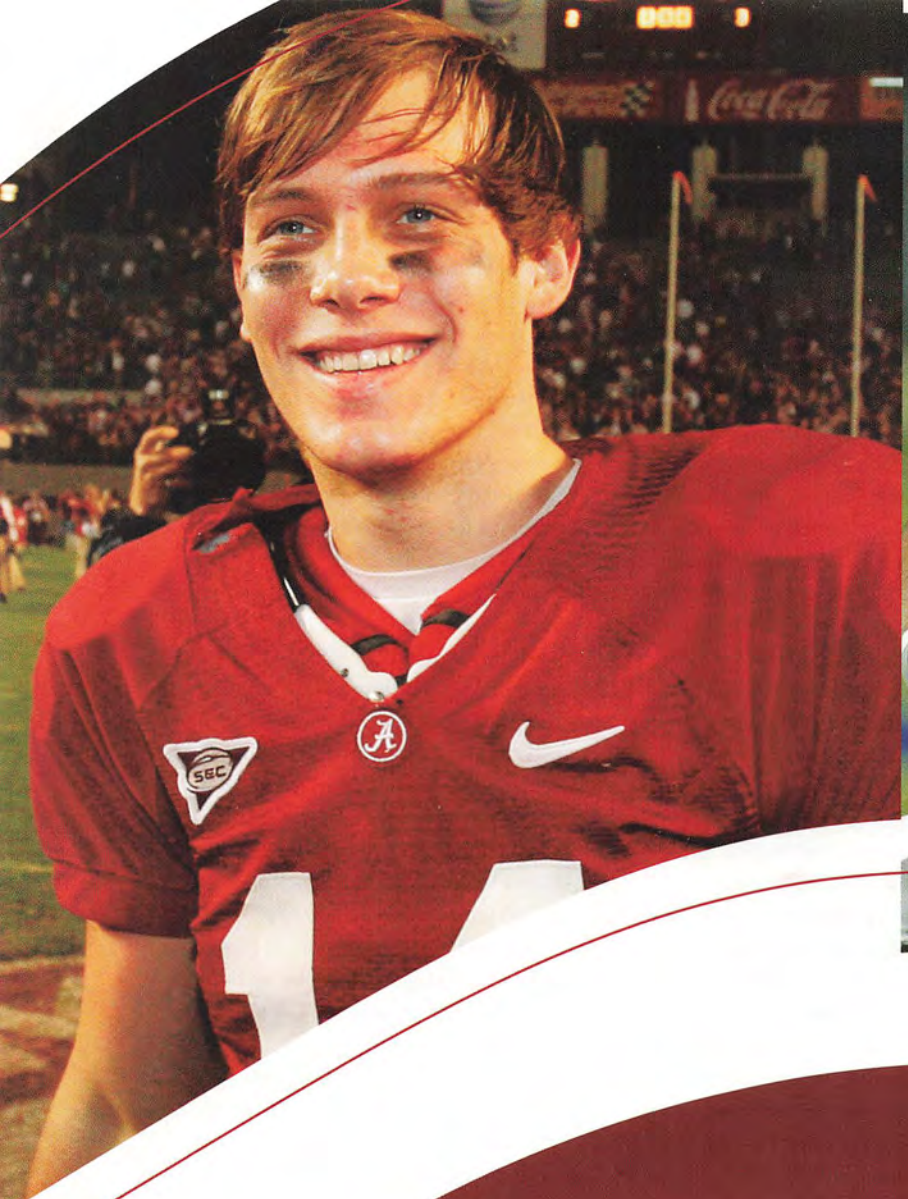
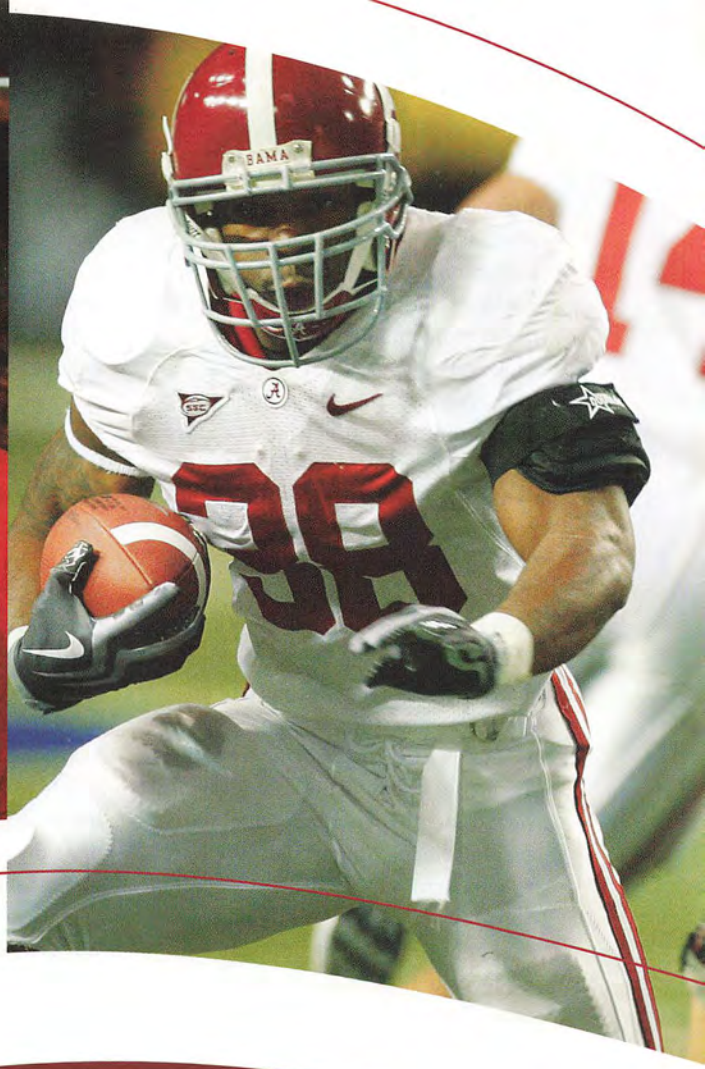




It took Nick Saban six games to finally admit it.

After his team defeated Kentucky to move to 6-0, the coach of the then-No. 2 team in the country peered out over the throng of media in the Bryant-Denny Stadium press room, and let his feelings be known.

"You can say what you want about our team, but I'll bet there weren't very many people in this room betting they'd be 6-0 right now," Saban said. "I'm not sure I would have either, if you want to know the truth about it."

And to think, that was before the dominating win in Knoxville, the overtime victory in Baton Rouge, and the regular season No. 1 ranking for the first time since 1980.

When Saban first arrived in Tuscaloosa as Alabama's coach, he often used the word "process." It was pasted on the front of his first media guide, declaring, "the process begins."

But many thought it would take at least two years for it to finally get underway. This year, Saban has shown that this journey may be close to completion.

It didn't feel that way in the dead of winter on Feb. 6, 2008, National Signing Day, when Saban talked about his recruiting class, ranked No. 1 by both Rivals.com and Scout.com. That day, he didn't sound like a coach looking at a team on the cusp of an undefeated season.

"I think we have a significant number of needs on our team because we lack depth on our team at almost every position," Saban said. "We were able to, across the board, attract some good players at about every position."

That day, two important dominoes fell for Saban. First, a little-known nose tackle from Gulf Coast Community College named Terrence Cody signed his letter-of-intent to play at Alabama. Also, that morning, in a nationally televised event, Foley High wide receiver Julio Jones, the consensus top player in the state, donned an Alabama cap to join the Crimson Tide in 2008.

"A little over a year ago we stood up here and made a commitment to this institution to make Alabama successful in the future," Saban said that day. "This recruiting class is a positive sep in that direction."

This was obvious in the season opener when the Tide throttled Clemson 34-10. In that game, Cody created havoc up front, with four tackles and one for a loss, as Alabama's defense allowed 20 yards rushing combined to Tigers running backs James Davis and C.J. Spiller.

Meanwhile, Jones finished the game with four catches and his first touchdown.

The prevailing thought before the Clemson game was if Alabama could win that one, it could have a pretty good year, and maybe exceed the initial expectations of eight wins.

Through its next four games, it didn't just win, it dominated its opponent. Only a 20-6 victory over Tulane provided a slight road bump, but that game was played without left tackle Andre Smith – who missed the game with a strained knee ligament.

After an easy victory over Western Kentucky, the Tide passed its first road test at Arkansas, winning 49-14. In that game, Cody went against Razorbacks center Jonathan Luigs, the 2007 Rimington trophy winner. And even he needed help against Alabama's big man.

"He wasn't as physical as I thought, but he was a good player," Cody said after the game. "He had his times against me, I had my times."

This set up Alabama's signature win over Georgia the following week. The Tide was No. 8 in the country at the time and walked into a blackout at Sanford Stadium in Athens.

But Alabama, led by quarterback John Parker Wilson, operated coolly and calmly in the first half, and built an insurmountable 31-0 lead, en route to a 41-30 victory over Georgia.

In that game, Wilson showed his progression as a quarterback by completing 13 of 16 passes for 205 yards and one touchdown.

Known for making poor choices and creating turnovers, Alabama focused throughout the offseason on helping Wilson make, what Saban called, "business decisions."

New offensive coordinator Jim McElwain came in and made the offense more quarterback-friendly. Gone were some of the long passes downfield that the Tide used under former offensive coordinator Major Applewhite. Instead, Alabama emphasized shorter, high-percentage passes.

It also asked Wilson to do less, since the Tide's running game, with Glen Coffee, Mark Ingram and Roy Upchurch, turned into a major strength. Instead of asking Wilson to win games for it, the coaches simply asked him to not make mistakes and take care of the ball.

"He's managed the game for us," center Antoine Caldwell said. "Coach McElwain came in and simplified a lot of things for J.P. and I think we've been on the same page all year."

But it's easy to simplify when you have a wide receiver like Jones. The freshman started out slow, but showed his mettle in tough road environments. Against Tennessee, he caught six passes for 103 yards. Then in Alabama's biggest win of the season, a 27-21 overtime victory over LSU that clinched the SEC West, Jones dragged Tigers' defenders on his back en route to 128 yards on seven catches.

"I have never seen a person that young be that good. It is like looking at an NFL player in college. It's crazy," wide receiver Nikita Stover said. "One play he had eight LSU defenders on him, and just looking at him inspires me, just a big, physical guy."

No matter the final outcome of the season, Alabama' 2008 will be considered a success. A potential eight-win season turned into a year with national championship aspirations, and with the freshmen set to return next season, as year older and a year wiser, the process should continue. But that doesn't mean the Tide can't enjoy itself for the rest of this season, as long as the wins pile up.

"I knew we were going to have a good season," Caldwell said. "I knew what kind of players we had coming back, and I knew a lot of people were buying into Coach Saban's plan, and we were going to have a lot better year than people thought we were going to have. But to this point, it's been perfect." ALFB

MEET THE TIDE

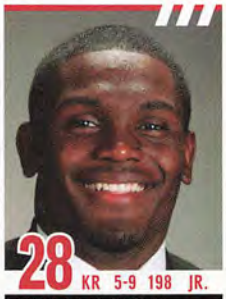
OFFENSE

Bruising by land and steady in the air, the '08 Tide offense scored 31.2 points per game.

14 QB 6-2 211 SR.

JOHN PARKER WILSON

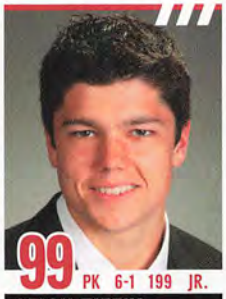
Wilson became the only Crimson Tide QB to go 12-0 in a regular season, and broke almost every Alabama passing record while under center. His 2008 numbers: 169-for-293 for 2,096 yards, nine TDs and six interceptions.



28 KR 5-9 198 JR.

JAVIER ARENAS

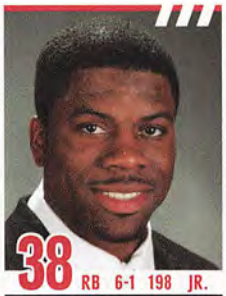
Arenas returned 21 of the Crimson Tide's 34 total fielded kickoffs in 2008, and gained 480 yards – a 22.9-yard average. His long kickoff return was 41 yards, and teams often kicked away from the big-play threat.



99 PK 6-1 199 JR.

LEIGH TIFFIN

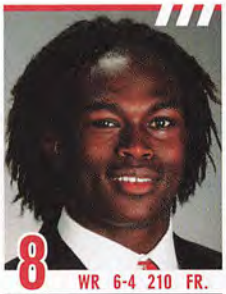
Tiffin was a Lou Groza Golden Toe Award semifinalist after a steady junior season that saw him make 19 of 26 field-goal attempts and 45 of 46 point-after-touchdown tries. His FG long was 54 yards.



38 RB 6-1 198 JR.

GLEN COFFEE

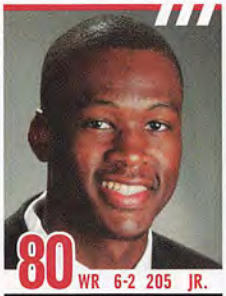
Alabama's leading rusher in 2008, Coffee carried the ball 220 times for 1,347 yards. Coffee found the end zone 10 times on the ground, and also caught 12 passes for 78 yards. His long run was for 87 yards, against Arkansas.



8 WR 6-4 210 FR.

JULIO JONES

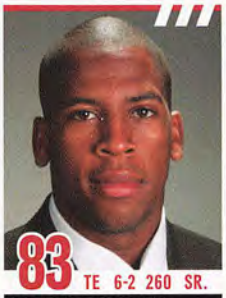
The SEC Freshman of the Year out of Foley High School made electrifying plays all season long, finishing with 51 receptions for 847 yards and four touchdowns – all team highs. He started in all 13 games.



80 WR 6-2 205 JR.

MIKE MCCOY

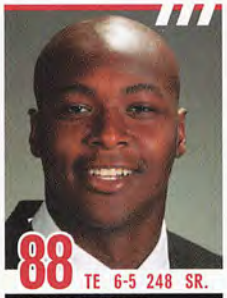
McCoy was Alabama's third-leading receiver in 2008, starting nine games and appearing in all 13 en route to 16 receptions for 191 yards and a touchdown. McCoy split time throughout the season with Marquis Maze.



83 TE 6-2 260 SR.

TRAVIS MCCALL

Alabama played a two-tight end set extensively in 2008, and McCall was a prime factor in the Tide's success. The senior caught seven passes for 52 yards, and was the key blocker downfield for much of Alabama's run success.



88 TE 6-5 248 SR.

NICK WALKER

The other half of Alabama's two-tight end set, Walker was Alabama's second-leading receiver. The senior hauled in 29 passes for 299 yards and two touchdowns – and was an efficient blocker in Alabama's run schemes.

71 LT 6-5 330 JR.

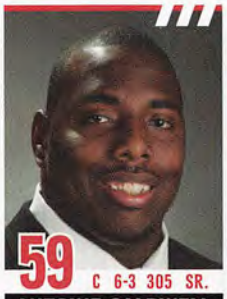
ANDRE SMITH

Smith was a finalist for both the Lombardi Award and the Outland Trophy during a standout junior season in 2008, and won the Jacobs Blocking Trophy in 2007. Smith surrendered only one sack in 12 starts in 2008.

78 LG 6-6 305 JR.

MIKE JOHNSON

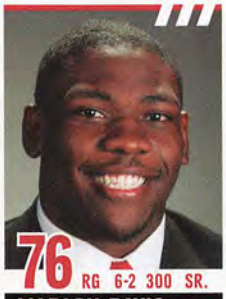
Johnson was named the SEC Offensive Lineman of the Week twice in 2008 (Clemson and Ole Miss), and started 12 games at left guard and one at left tackle for the injured Smith. Johnson has started 26 straight games.



59 C 6-3 305 SR.

ANTOINE CALDWELL

Caldwell was a candidate for the Rimington Trophy and the Outland Trophy in 2008, and is considered one of the best centers in the country. Caldwell was the SEC Offensive Lineman of the Week after the Auburn victory.



76 RG 6-2 300 SR.

MARLON DAVIS

Davis has been a stalwart along Alabama's offensive line, having started 25 career games – including 12 this season at right guard. Davis was a key in Alabama gaining 234 rushing yards against Auburn in the Iron Bowl.

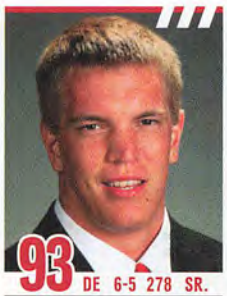
79 RT 6-7 300 JR.

DREW DAVIS

Davis started all 13 games for Alabama in 2008, and was a part of a unit that helped produce 201.5 rushing yards per game. Along with Marlon Davis, he was the key to many of UA's 234 rushing yards against Auburn.

DEFENSE

One of the best run-stopping units in the country, the '08 Crimson Tide defense allowed just 78.8 yards and 13 points per game over 13 games.



93 DE 6-5 278 SR.

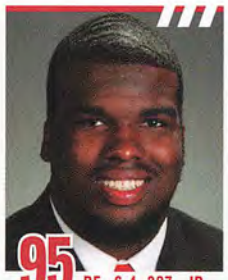
BOBBY GREENWOOD

Greenwood was a star in Alabama's 3-4 defensive scheme in 2008, and he tied with Brandon Deaderick with a team-high four sacks this season. He piled up 35 total tackles in 13 games, and blocked a kick.

62 NT 6-5 365 JR.

TERRENCE CODY

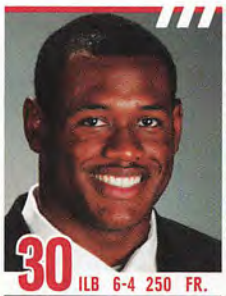
A mammoth force in the middle of the Tide's 3-4 unit, Cody draws double-teams almost the entire game. He started 11 of 13 games, missing two via injury, and had 23 total tackles and two fumble recoveries.



95 DE 6-4 287 JR.

BRANDON DEADERICK

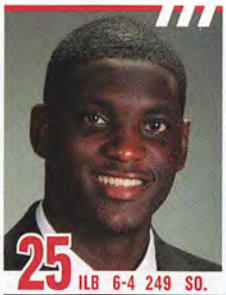
Deaderick enjoyed a standout season in 2008, starting all 13 games and piling up 35 tackles and a team-high four sacks. He had a career-high eight tackles against LSU, and was a Player of the Week.



30 ILB 6-4 250 FR.

DONT'A HIGHTOWER

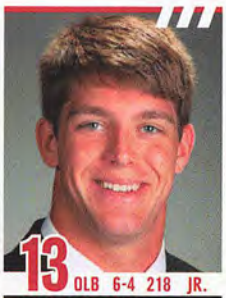
A true freshman out of Lewisburg, Tenn., Hightower burst upon the scene in 2008 with 12 starts and 62 total tackles — the fourth-best total for Alabama. Hightower also recovered two fumbles.



25 ILB 6-4 249 SO.

ROLANDO MCCLAIN

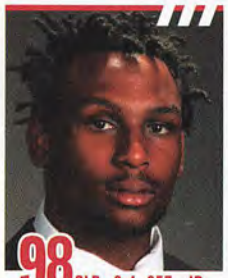
One of the best linebackers in the country as just a sophomore, McClain was a finalist for the Butkus Award in 2008 and is the playcaller on the defensive front. McClain led UA with 91 tackles and had two sacks.



13 OLB 6-4 218 JR.

COREY REAMER

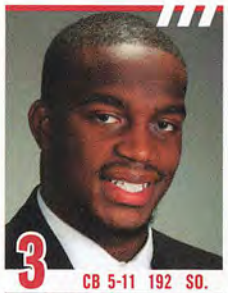
A converted safety that has excelled as the strong-side linebacker, Reamer started 11 games at the position and appeared in all 13. In that time, Reamer had 35 tackles, a sack and a forced fumble.



98 OLB 6-4 257 JR.

BRANDON FANNEY

Fanney started all 13 games as the "Jack" linebacker for Alabama in 2008, and ranks third on the team with 64 total tackles. Fanney also had a sack and a fumble recovery, and is second with nine tackles for loss.



3 CB 5-11 192 SO.

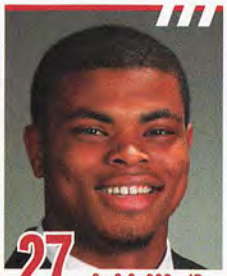
KAREEM JACKSON

A proven shutdown corner in just his sophomore season, Jackson has 25 career starts and ranks sixth on the team with 41 total tackles. Jackson had 11 defended passes with 10 break-ups and an interception.

49 FS 6-0 186 SR.

RASHAD JOHNSON

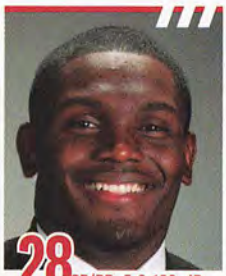
The All-SEC selection and All-American candidate was the Little Rock Touchdown Club's SEC Defensive Player of the Year. He had 82 total tackles, five interceptions totaling 125 yards and two touchdowns.



27 S 6-2 220 JR.

JUSTIN WOODALL

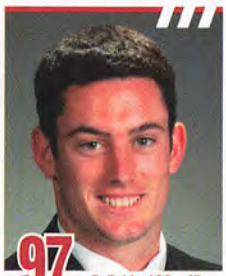
Woodall bookended Jackson throughout 2008, and had a breakout season. He finished with 45 total tackles, four interceptions — including one that was taken back for a touchdown — and forced two fumbles.



28 CB/PR 5-9 198 JR.

JAVIER ARENAS

Arenas turned in two game-changing punt returns for touchdowns, and finished the 2008 season with 40 returns for 577 yards (a 14.4-yard average). Teams often punted away from him to negate a big play.



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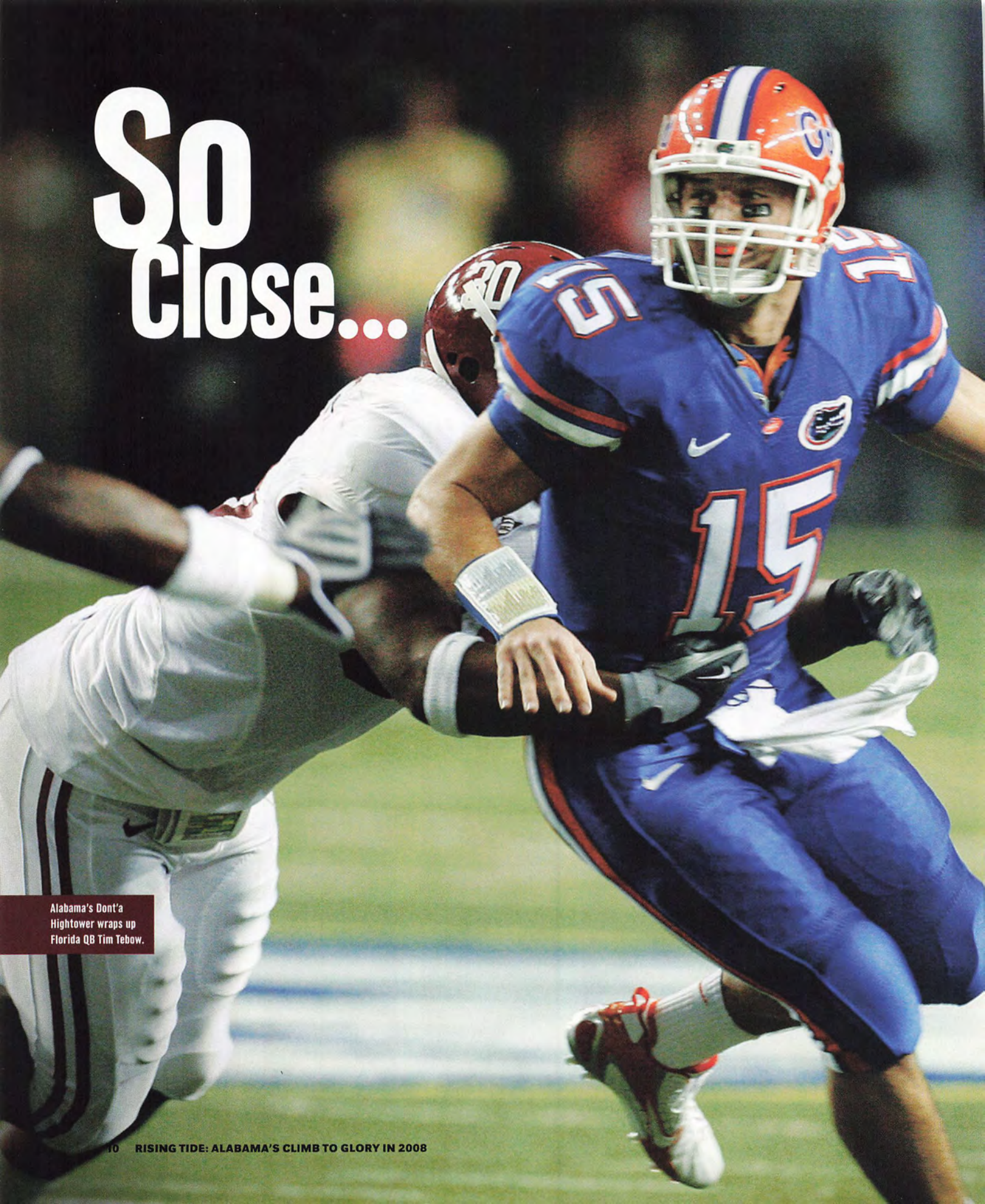
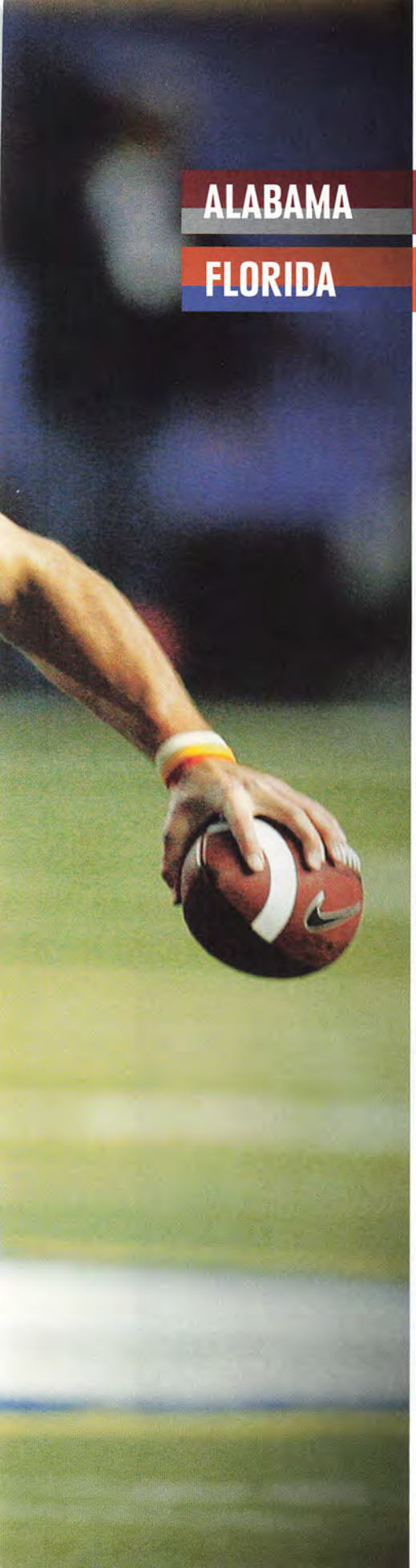
P.J. FITZGERALD

Fitzgerald turned in a solid 2008 season for the Crimson Tide, punting the ball 55 times for 2,261 yards — good for a 41.1-yard average. His longest punt traveled 56 yards, he had 14 downed inside the 20 and 3 go 50-plus.

So Close...



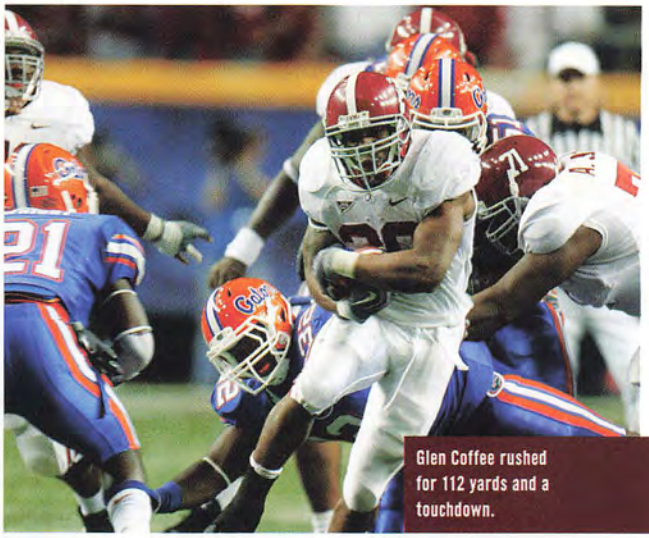
Alabama's Dont'a Hightower wraps up Florida QB Tim Tebow.



		SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.1	10	0	10	0	20
FLORIDA	No. 2	7	10	0	14	31

DEC 6
GEORGIA DOME ATLANTA, GA.

Tim Tebow lifts the Gators past the Crimson Tide in the SEC Championship Game's first-ever 1 vs. 2 matchup.



Glen Coffee rushed for 112 yards and a touchdown.

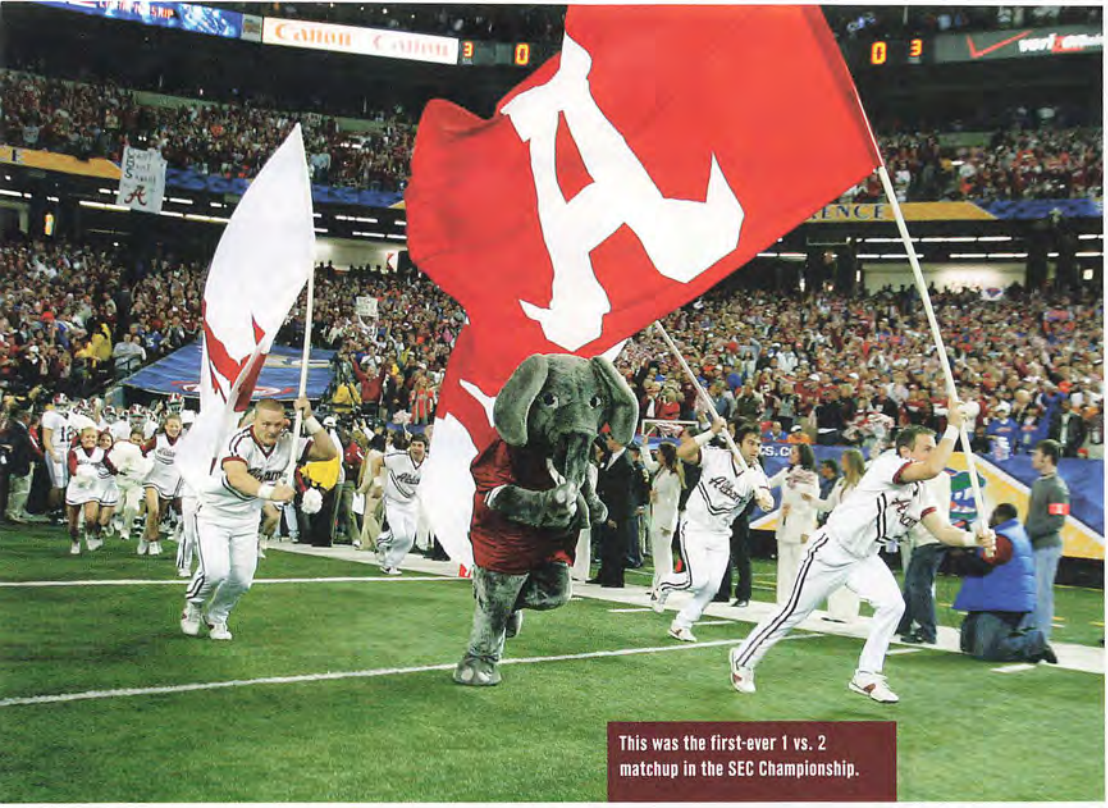
Tim Tebow took it upon himself to give Florida a shot at another national championship — and ended Alabama's magical run at that same crown.

With one of his best weapons watching from the sidelines, if the Gators needed a big run, Tebow tucked it under his arm and ran. If they needed to complete a pass, he threw it right where it needed to be.

Tebow threw three touchdown passes – including the clinching score with just under 3 minutes remaining – to lead the No. 2 Gators to a 31-20 victory over No. 1 Alabama in the Southeastern Conference championship game Saturday.

The win should be enough to give Florida (12-1) a spot in the BCS title game for the second time in three years, and Tebow's performance will surely bolster his chances of becoming just the second player to win the Heisman Trophy two years in a row.

"We don't want to be denied in anything we do," said Tebow, who car-



This was the first-ever 1 vs. 2 matchup in the SEC Championship.

ried his team with star receiver Percy Harvin watching from the sidelines.

Showing it could win a close game in a season of routs, Florida (12-1) went into the fourth quarter trailing 20-17. Jeff Demps, among those filling in for the injured Harvin, scored the go-ahead touchdown on a 2-yard run with 9:21 remaining. Tebow finished the scoring with a pass that couldn't have been thrown any better, hitting Riley Cooper for a 5-yard TD with 2:50 left.

"I've had some great players, and I've got some great players on this team," Florida coach Urban Meyer said. "But I've never had one like this. Tim's got something special inside him. That fourth quarter was vintage Tim Tebow."

Alabama (12-1) couldn't have picked a worse time to lose. The Crimson Tide will settle for a spot in the Sugar Bowl against undefeated Mountain West Champion Utah.

Meanwhile, it's another BCS title game for Florida, which won it just two years ago with a rout of Ohio State.

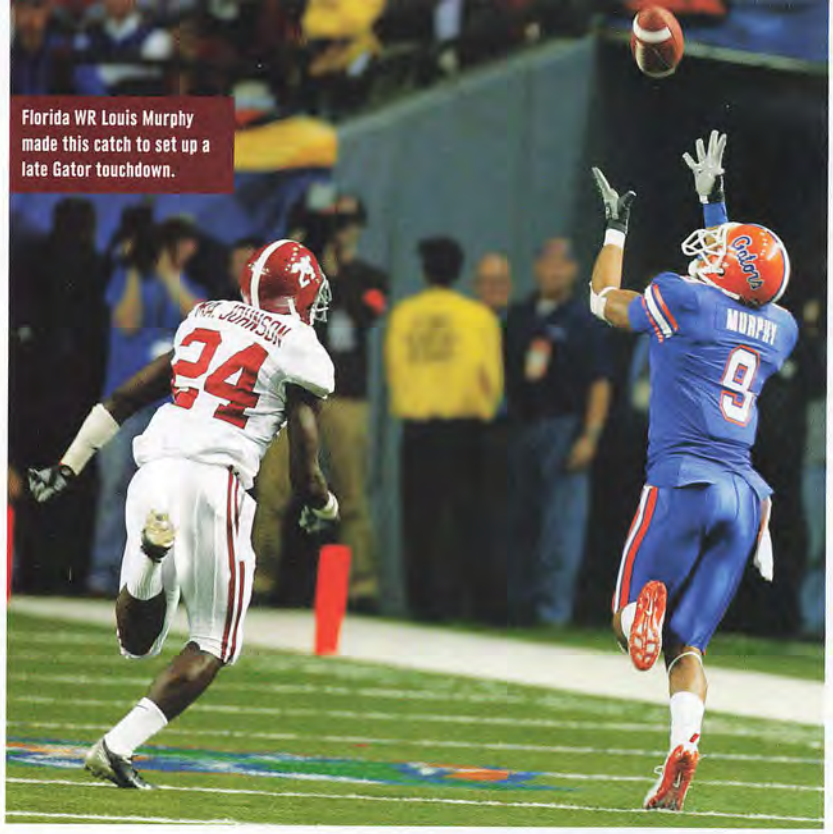
Their opponent? Oklahoma. The Sooners (12-1) easily dispatched Missouri, 62-21, in the Big XII Championship game later in the evening.

Oklahoma will have the tough task of stopping Tebow, who was 14-of-22 passing 216 yards and led the team in rushing with 57 yards. He tossed a 3-yard touchdown pass to Carl Moore to finish off Florida's opening possession, went five yards to David Nelson to give the Gators a 17-10 halftime lead, and came through one more time to clinch the victory.

Alabama coach Nick Saban, who needed only two years to restore the Tide to Bear Bryant-like prominence, knew who was mainly responsible for his team's first loss. Tebow.

"He's a great competitor. He takes his teammates on his shoulders a lot," Saban said. "They have a lot of confidence he's going to make plays,

Julio Jones pulled down five catches for a game-high 124 receiving yards.



Florida WR Louis Murphy made this catch to set up a late Gator touchdown.

BY THE NUMBERS

	ALA	UF
YARDS RUSHING	136	142
Rushing Attempts	33	42
YARDS PASSING	187	216
Completions-Attempts	12-25	14-22
TOTAL YARDS	323	358
TURNOVERS	1	0
FIRST DOWNS	18	19
PENALTIES (YARDS)	2 (31)	6 (45)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 08:17 UF - Carl Moore 3 yd pass from Tim Tebow (Jonathan Phillips kick)
9 plays, 59 yards, TOP 4:28, UA 0 - UF 7
07:23 UA - Glen Coffee 18 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
2 plays, 82 yards, TOP 0:54, UA 7- UF 7
03:28 UA - Leigh Tiffin 30 yd field goal.
5 plays, 12 yards, TOP 2:15, UA 10 - UF 7
2nd 08:59 UF - Jonathan Phillips 19 yd field goal
8 plays, 67 yards, TOP 3:51, UA 10 - UF 10
02:59 UF - David Nelson 5 yd pass from Tim Tebow (Jonathan Phillps)
9 plays, 57 yards, TOP 4:20, UA 10 - UF 17
3rd 06:20 UA - Mark Ingram 2 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
15 plays, 91 yards, TOP 6:53, UA 17 - UF 17
00:08 UA - Leigh Tiffin 27 yd field goal
10 plays, 65 yards, TOP 3:40, UA 20 - UF 17
4th 09:21 UF - Jeffrey Demps 1 yd run (Jonathan Phillips kick)
11 plays, 62 yards, TOP 5:47, UA 20 - UF 24
02:50 UF - Riley Cooper 5 yd pass from Tim Tebow (Jonathan Phillips kick)
8 plays, 65 yards, TOP 4:37, UA 20 - UF 31

and they play that way. They scored two touchdowns where we had them covered about as well as we could cover them."

With Florida facing third-and-goal at the 6-yard line after a rare sideline interference penalty, Tebow found Cooper breaking toward the middle in front of Marquis Johnson. The perfectly thrown pass – low enough to give no chance of an interception but high enough to catch – was cradled by a diving Cooper to make it a two-score game.

Joe Haden's interception ended any hope of a comeback. Tebow was named the game's MVP.

Alabama trailed at halftime for first time this year, but erased the deficit with a 10-point surge in the third quarter.

Mark Ingram finished a 91-yard drive with 2-yard touchdown run and Leigh Tiffin booted his second field goal, a 27-yarder that pushed Alabama ahead going to the final period.

"Going 12-0 is a hard thing to do," Saban said. "Every time they needed to make a play, Tim Tebow made the plays that made the difference in the game."

Meyer, not surprisingly, gave Tebow endorsement for another Heisman.

"I think he's the best college football player in America," the coach said.

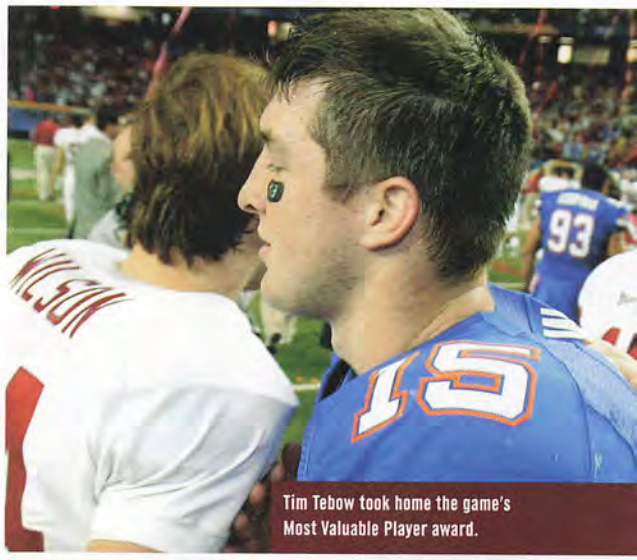
The Gators marched right down the field on their first possession, looking as unstoppable as they did in most games this season. Tebow handled most of the load, completing three passes for 26 yards and running four times for 19 more.

But Alabama wasn't going to go down as meekly as most of Florida's opponents. Glen Coffee ran for 112 yards and a touchdown. Julio Jones hauled in five passes for 124 yards. The Tide defense delivered numerous crushing blows, hoping to rattle the Gators.

Tebow wouldn't let them bite.

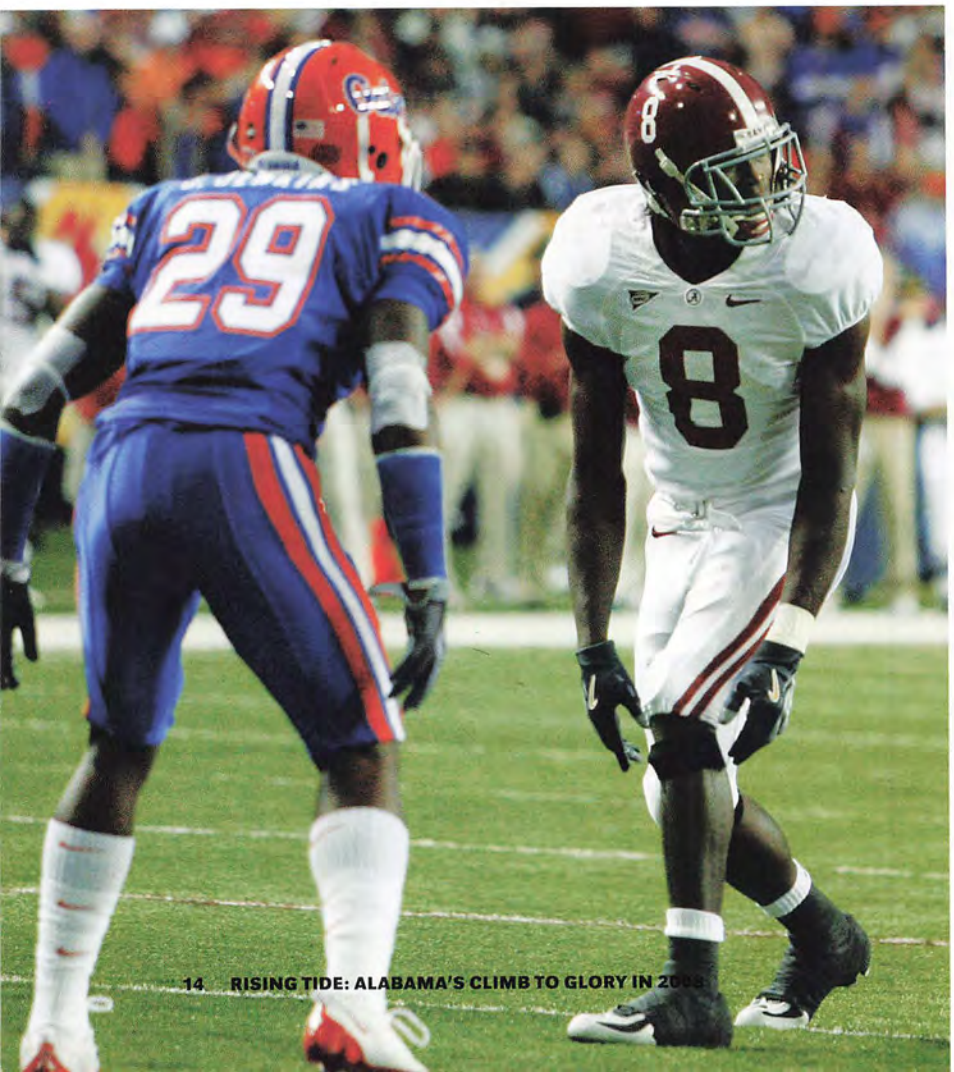
"We kind of ran out of gas a little bit in the fourth quarter," Saban said.

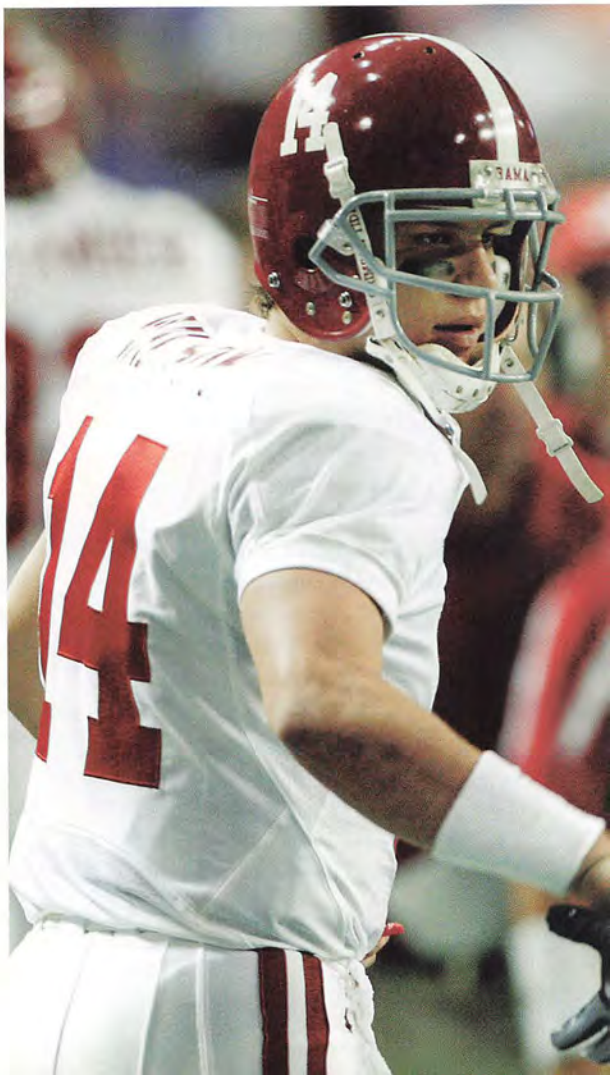
"We didn't finish, and they did." **ALFB**

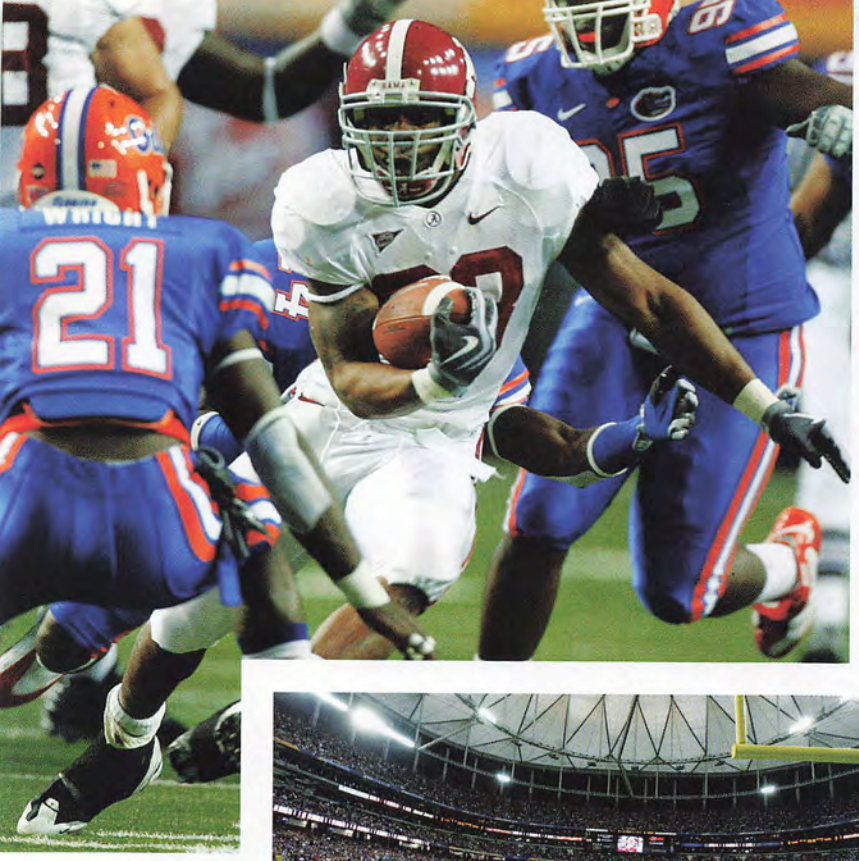


Tim Tebow took home the game's Most Valuable Player award.

SEC CHAMPIONSHIP



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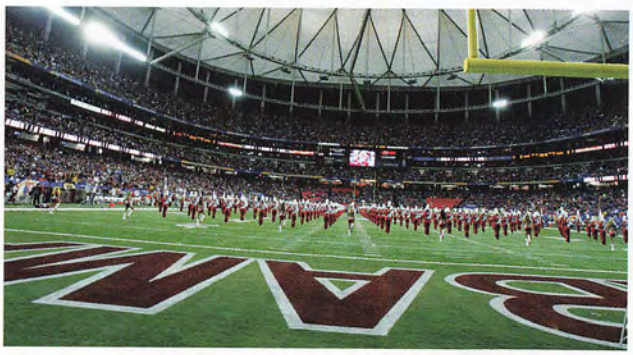

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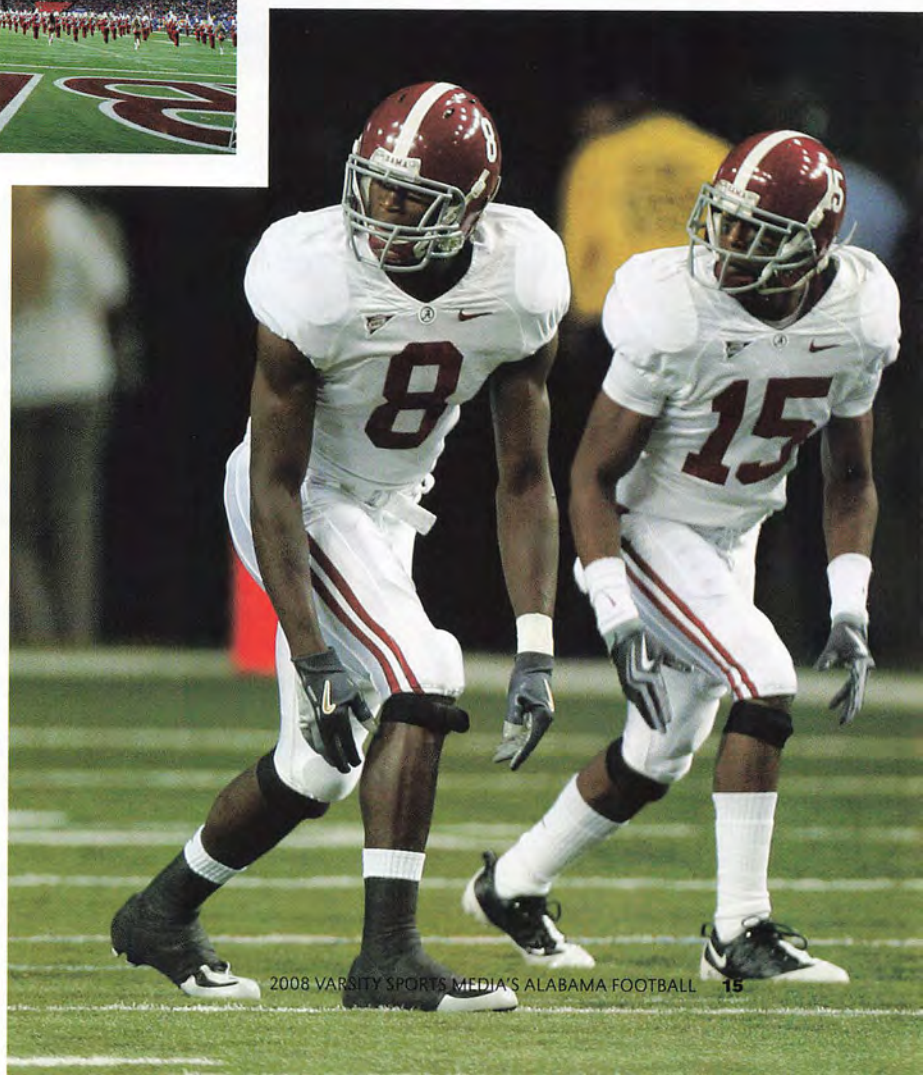
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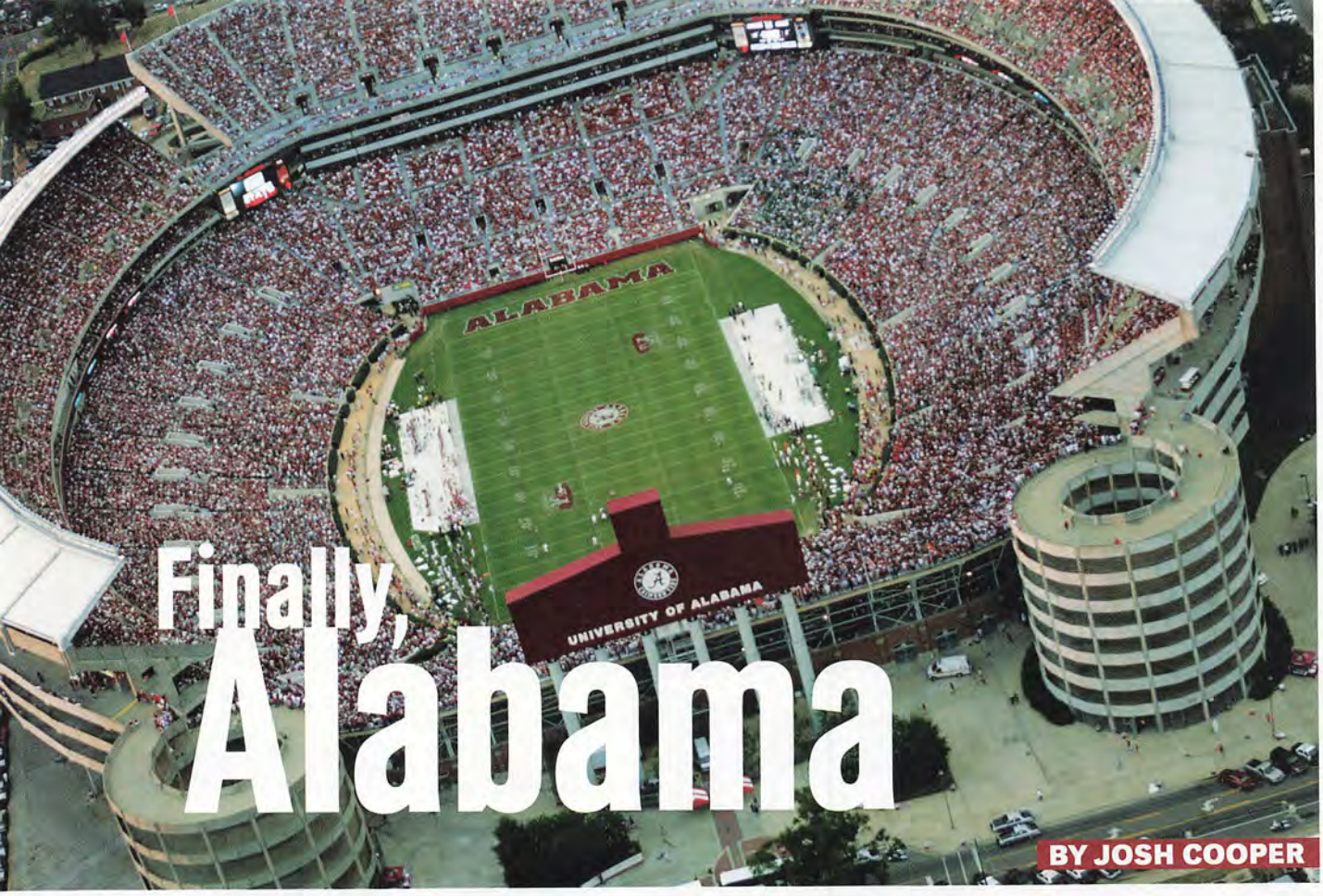


Finally, Alabama

BY JOSH COOPER

Anton Huber had the truck running and ready to go.

The vice president of sales for the store Bama Fever was all set to head down to Montgomery to pick up shirts emblazoned with the score 24-21, in honor of Alabama's Nov. 8 victory over LSU that sent the Crimson Tide to its first SEC Championship Game since 1999.

Except that wasn't the final score.

Huber expected Alabama kicker Leigh Tiffin to boot the game-winning field goal at the end of the fourth quarter to win the game for the Tide. But the kick never made it past the scrum in front of Tiffin.

"I was talking to my printer and they are saying they are ready to go," Huber said. "All we have to do is put the score on the shirt, and we were ready to pick up."

LSU defensive end Ricky Jean-Francois blocked Tiffin's kick, and Huber had to wait a few extra minutes to inform his people that the final score, after overtime, was 27-21.

Said Huber, "I hopped in the truck, drove an hour to pick up several boxes of score shirts and delivered them to all my stores."

That Sunday, those 900 shirts flew off the shelves in Huber's store as people braved the burgeoning economic crisis to pick up a piece of Alabama history.

Score shirts may be a big seller, but other items have been almost, if not more popular.

Car magnets, flags, any kind of merchandise with a giant crimson "A" on it. all go quickly.

"Anything that shows 'I am representing the university. I am proud to be a 'Bama fan,' we are seeing a lot of that move," Huber said.

This year, as the economy has spiraled downward, Alabama has seen spikes in almost every facet of its program: Team success, football revenue, fan interest and national interest.

"It's almost like the Tide fan base is on a drunken binge. You're kind of tiptoeing around and you can't believe it with this," Birmingham-based and statewide syndicated radio host Paul Finebaum said. "I have seen a lot of things, but I really don't quite remember anything like this."

When Nick Saban took over as the head coach at Alabama on Jan. 4, 2007, the fan base was loyal as always, but lacked the kind of spark that it has displayed since he arrived in Tuscaloosa.

In 2006, Alabama's football revenue was at a modest $44,426,312, good for third in the SEC, but behind both Florida (48,194,552) and Auburn (51,598,921). After Saban was hired, interest immediately perked, as shown in the sardine-like setting at the 2007 A-Day game, but it was tough to tell if it had really spiked.

In the past year, the football revenue has grown almost $13 million, to $57,370,617. That number still ranks behind Auburn and Florida, but that could change with a top-flight bowl game this year.

"Alabama fans everywhere are about as excited as they can possibly be. It is amazing," said Alabama board of trust member Finis St. John IV. "(Coach Saban) has done such a great job, I don't think anybody would have expected this kind of success this early, but it has been an exciting and great year."

But it's not just interest by normal Alabama fans. As the school's athletic profile has been raised, so has its visibility amongst students nationwide. St. John partially credits the growth in student quality to the perception of the football program.

"The success of the program has been great for fan support, financial support and interest in the program," St. John said. "I think it has spilled over to interest for good students in the school. There is a great sense of momentum at the university."

That sense of momentum is still strongest with Alabama's core fan base. In years past, when the Tide was expected to win, fans still supported their team, but not like they are this year.

First, the Clemson victory got fans going, then the win over Georgia – which launched Alabama to No. 2 in the polls – made them believe more, and then, the victory over LSU was the final icing on the cake.

"I think, for the first couple of weeks, everyone was looking over their shoulder like, 'When is this going to end?' Finebaum said. "Then Georgia emboldened people and it kept on going. I think LSU was like the final mountain to climb and now, people are finally enjoying the ride."

If you want to take a pulse on Alabama nation, one of the best places to look is the various clothing stores that sell Alabama gear in Tuscaloosa.

"It has been very helpful for us," said David Jones, the owner of the store, Alabama Express, which resides on Tuscaloosa's strip on University Boulevard. "The season started off kind of slow, but as we kept winning, and looking better every game, it just, it got better."

As people walked into Alabama Express and thumbed through the various items on the shelves, Jones talked about how, even in bad economic times, people still feel the need to purchase Alabama gear to make themselves feel good.

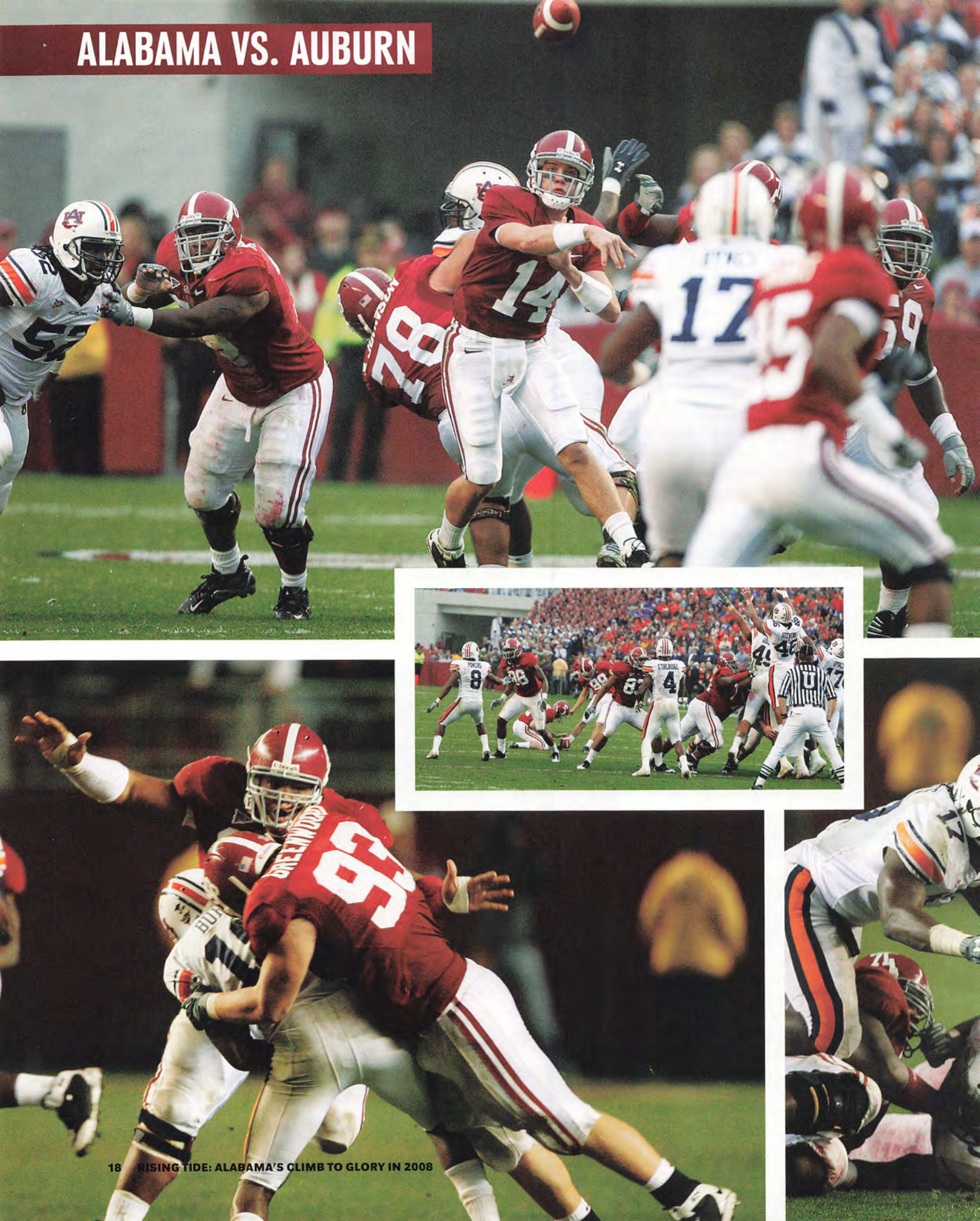
"You don't have to have a t-shirt, and you have to have food, but this is an escape," Jones said. "You buy a feel-good t-shirt and that makes you feel better about the economy. You may be in trouble somewhere else, but a victory t-shirt makes you feel better."

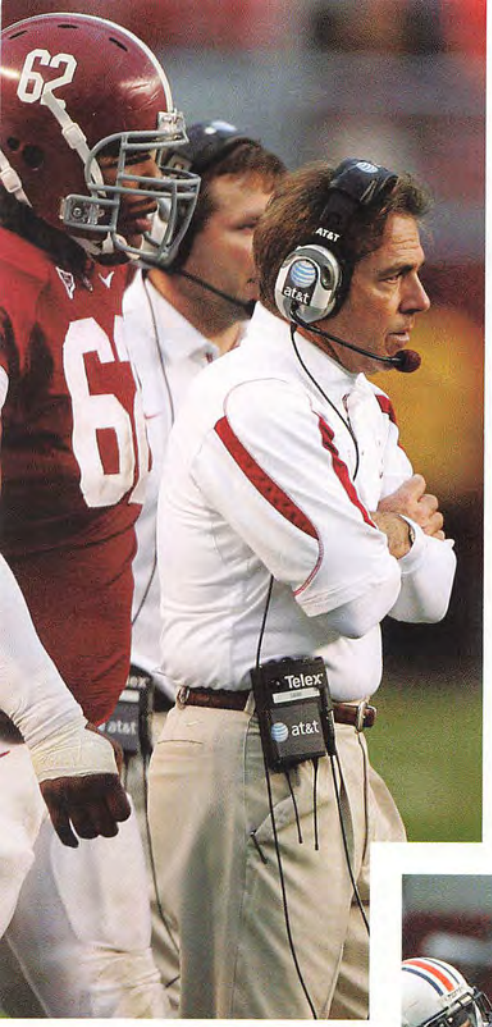
In a strange way, the dream season for Alabama has helped these various apparel stores trudge through the sour market.

At Bama Fever, sales were up 12.5 percent from the previous year, and that was before "Black Friday" which this year, fell one day before the Iron Bowl.

"This saved our season, this saved our year," Huber said. "If they win the SEC, or for some reason go to a national championship game, then that helps our first quarter going into 2009. It has been phenomenal for us and it has been a huge blessing." **ALFB**

ALABAMA VS. AUBURN

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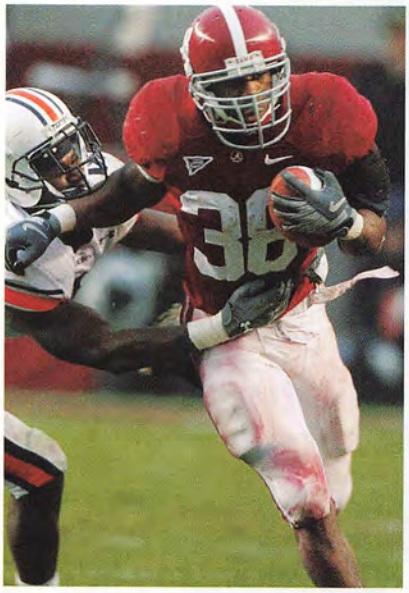
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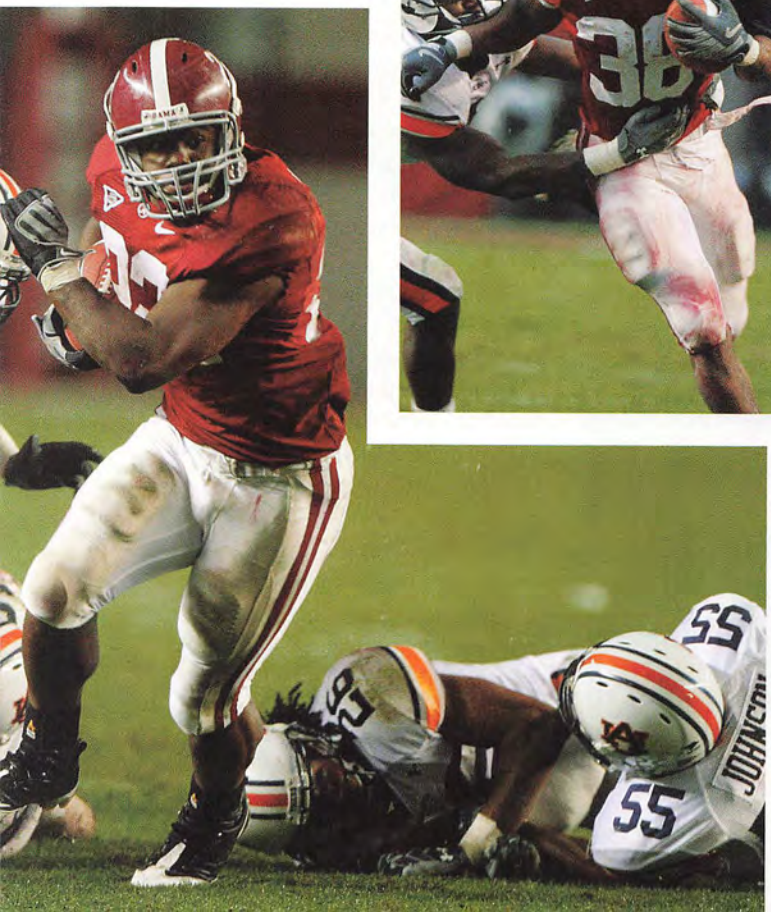
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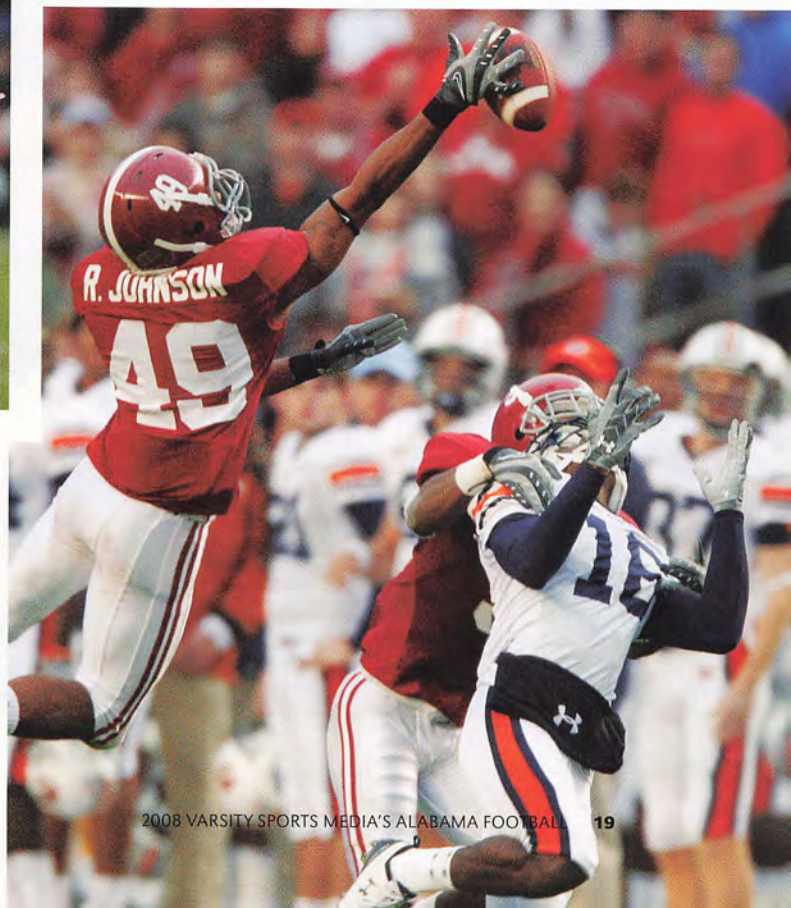
R. JOHNSON
49

John Parker Wilson

Until 2008, Wilson was not a Crimson Tide quarterbacking legend. But then 12-0 happened.

BY CHARITY SCOTT

Alabama Crimson Tide head coach Nick Saban is well known for the high expectations he has for his players. He's also respected for being one of the best at helping his players exceed those expectations.

So when he recently praised senior quarterback John Parker Wilson's development into a more consistent leader, his words were as good as gold.

"I think more of it is stability on his part and managing and handling situations, being more confident and having a better understanding," Saban said. "We've talked about this quite a bit, of his businesslike approach of what he is doing."

Saban said Wilson's ability to make great decisions on a consistent basis is the root of his success, and it is critical to being the first Alabama quarterback to ever go 12-0 in a regular season.

"He is a very competitive guy and very emotional," Saban said. "To be able to kind of stay in his zone and make good choices and decisions and make business decisions has probably been the biggest difference in his play.

"I think it's probably minimized his bad plays and certainly affected his good plays and certainly helped us offensively by not having as many negative plays."

For his part, Wilson's was able to maintain his focus throughout the entire season, and his teammates are constantly praising his leadership skills. Wilson said he is happy with the legacy he is leaving behind at the Capstone, after what he said has been a rewarding season.

"It's a lot more fun," he said. "We've had fun this season winning games. We have been taking that approach each week to just go have fun and not worry about anything else. It's a lot better when you are winning." ALFB

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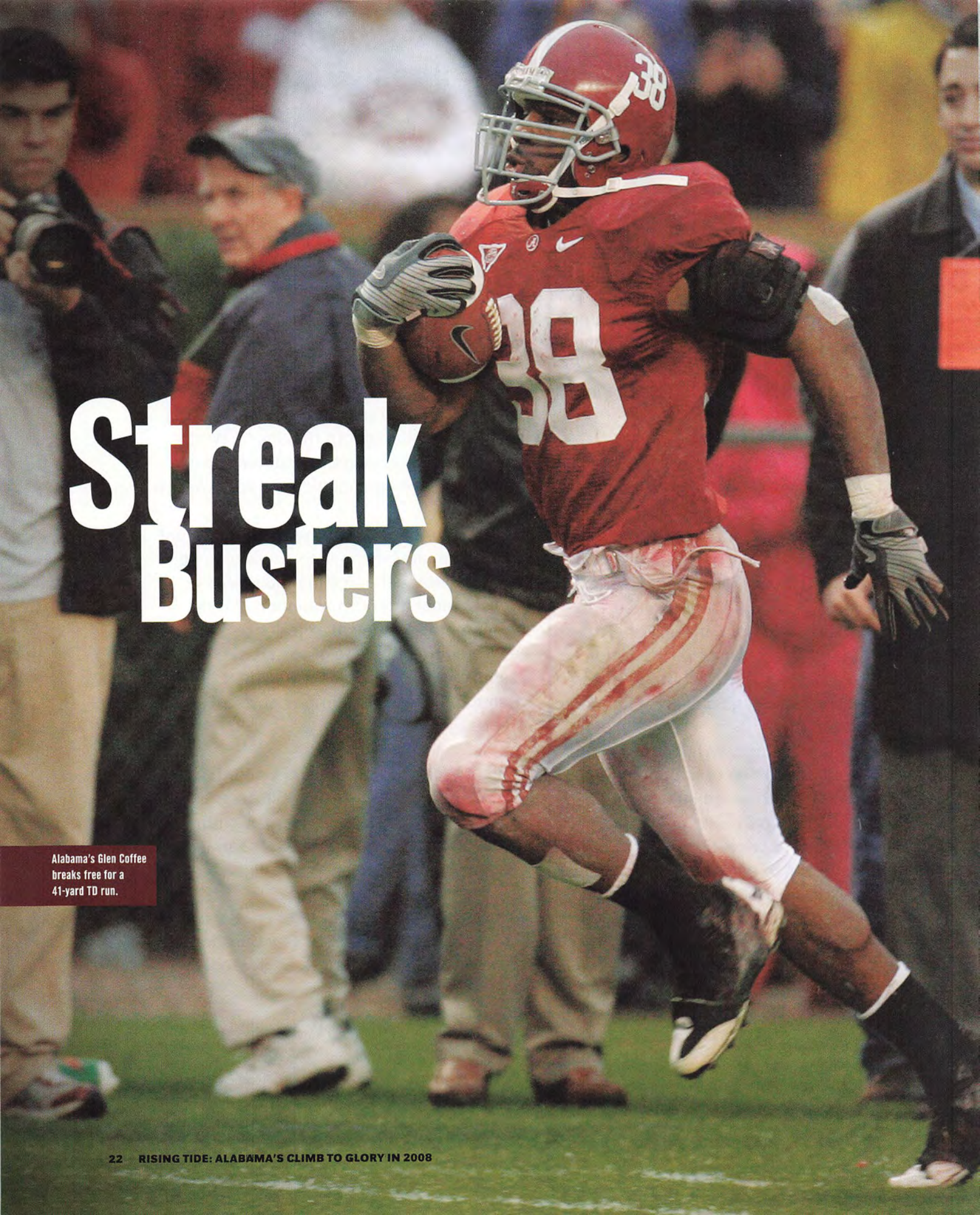


Streak Busters

Alabama's Glen Coffee breaks free for a 41-yard TD run.

			SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.1	NOV 29	3	7	19	7	36
AUBURN	UR	BRYANT-DENNY TUSCALOOSA	0	0	0	0	0

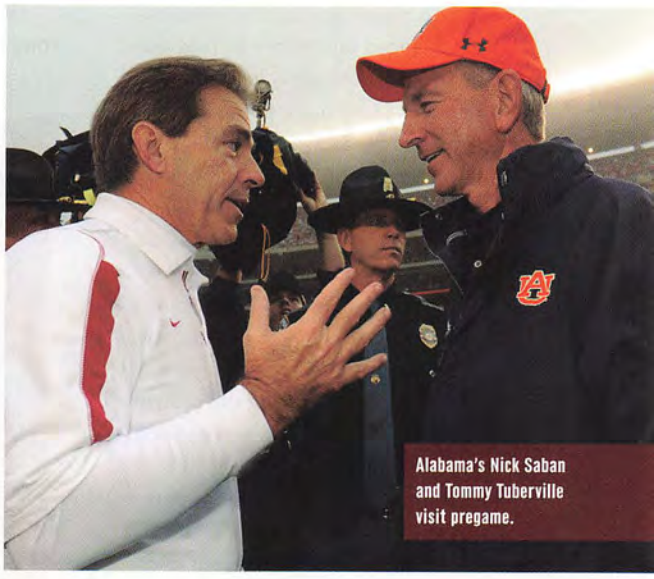
Six years of futility against the cross-state rival disappeared quickly in the Iron Bowl fog as No. 1 Alabama pounds Auburn.

From the depths of NCAA probation and the butt of punch lines across America, from .500 seasons and SEC mediocrity, they have risen.

Gone is the memory of "looking down the barrel of a loaded gun," Mike Price's self-destruction and six years of futility against the arch-rival.

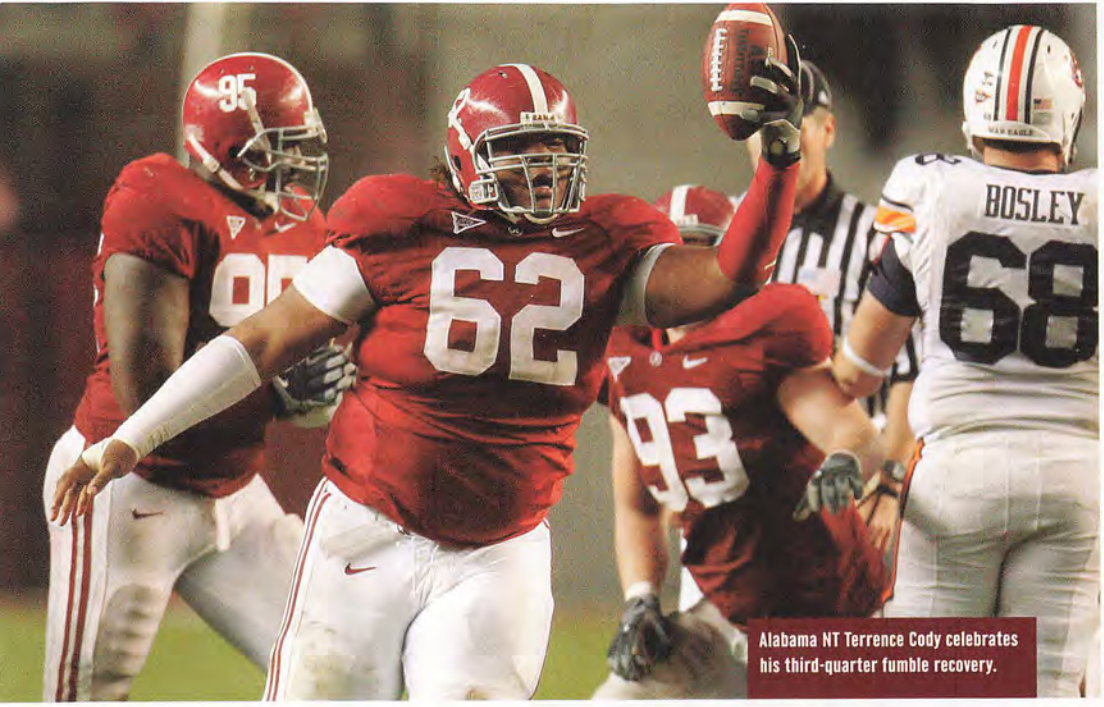
Finally, Alabama has returned to the promised land of college football domination. Nick Saban has made sure of that.

The top-ranked Crimson Tide, quietly confident Saturday afternoon against a swaggering-yet-crumbling Auburn program, affirmed for the rest of the country what die-hard fans across the Crimson Nation already knew – it is for real and ready to scale even greater heights than Saturday's 36-0 Iron Bowl victory can bring.



Alabama's Nick Saban and Tommy Tuberville visit pregame.

Saturday's win against the Tigers snapped Auburn's much-discussed six-game winning streak, and set up perhaps the best SEC Championship Game in history next week against a Florida Gators team that could enter as the nation's No. 2 team.



Alabama NT Terrence Cody celebrates his third-quarter fumble recovery.

"It was obviously a great win for our fans, and it was a great win for our players," Saban said. "We don't have a player on our team who has experienced this before so that was our goal. It was really less about the rivalry and more about doing something that was within our power if we focused on the right things and put our energy into the right things and went out there and played good football technically – out-hit them, out-execute them – then we would have a good chance to be successful.

"When I came here, change was probably inevitable. But the growth that everyone has had was optional. Everyone had to buy into it,. The seniors we have on this team were a key to changing the culture, starting after the bowl game last year and through the summer and offseason. They provided examples and leadership to younger players. I am pleased and happy for our seniors, and I want everyone to know that they were the group who changed the culture of how we play football around here. It is the way Alabama has always played football.

"We have one more challenge, certainly against a great opponent, and looking forward to having that challenge."

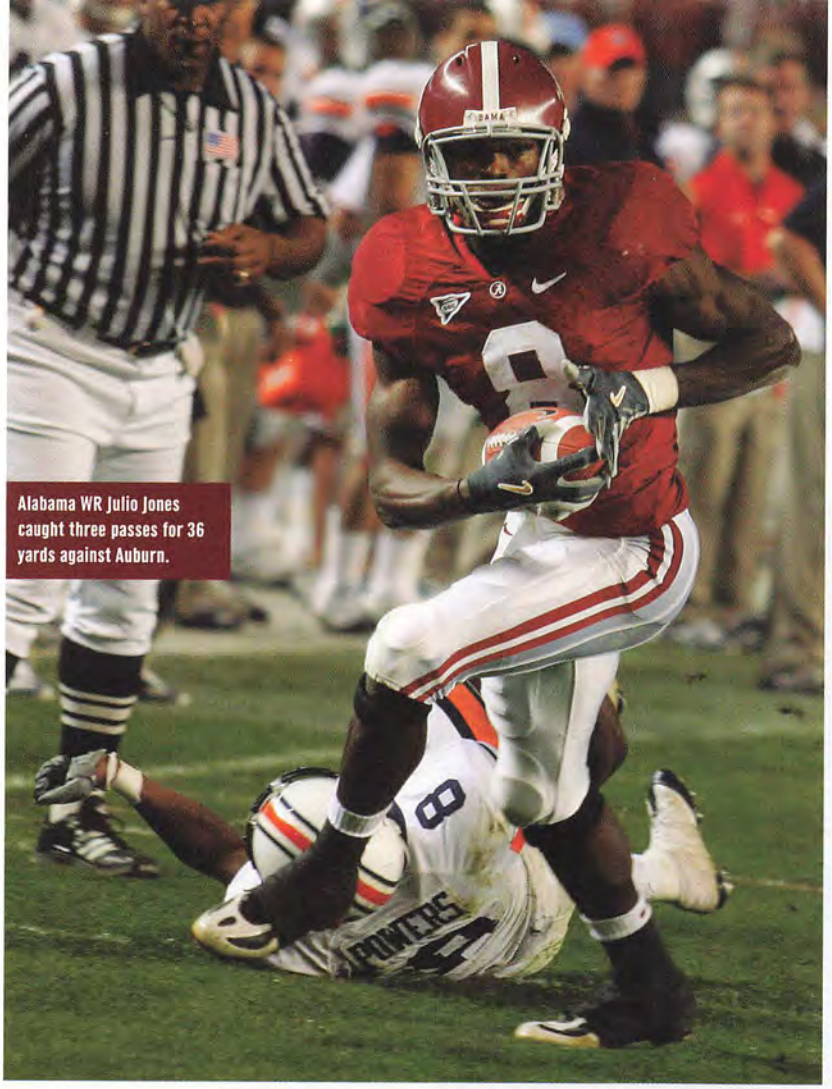
Glen Coffee rushed for 144 yards and a touchdown to help claim the biggest margin of victory in the series in 46 years.

The dominant win set the stage for Alabama (12-0, 8-0 Southeastern Conference) to face No. 2 Florida in the league championship game with a berth in the BCS national title game on the line.

Of more immediate concern for Tide fans, the state belongs to them again. And there was little question of that by the middle of the third quarter when a 10-0 game turned ugly – or beautiful, depending on the perspective.

The loss left Auburn (5-7, 2-6) shut out of a bowl game for the first time in nine years and cast another

Alabama's defense surrounded Tigers QB Kodi Burns throughout.



Alabama WR Julio Jones caught three passes for 36 yards against Auburn.

BY THE NUMBERS

	AUB	ALA
YARDS RUSHING	57	234
Rushing Attempts	30	50
YARDS PASSING	113	178
Completions-Attempts	9-23	10-18
TOTAL YARDS	170	412
TURNOVERS	3	0
FIRST DOWNS	8	21
PENALTIES (YARDS)	4 (45)	1 (4)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 00:00 UA - Leigh Tiffin 37 yd field goal
15 plays, 76 yards, TOP 7:36, AU 0 - UA 3
2nd 10:28 UA - Glen Coffee 41 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
4 plays, 65 yards, TOP 1:38, AU 0 - UA 10
3rd 13:15 UA - Nikita Stover 39 yd pass from John Parker Wilson (Leigh Tiffin kick blocked)
1 play, 39 yards, TOP 0:12, AU 0 - UA 16
07:35 UA - Mark Ingram 1 yd run (John Parker Wilson pass failed)
8 plays, 45 yards, TOP 4:20, AU 0 - UA 22
02:10 UA - Mark Ingram 14 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
7 plays, 50 yards, TOP 3:38, AU 0 - UA 29
4th 02:49 UA - Marquis Maze 34 yd pass from Greg McElroy (Leigh Tiffin kick)
5 plays, 53 yards, TOP 2:51, AU 0 - UA 36

shadow on the decade-long tenure of coach Tommy Tuberville. Auburn, which had been 7-2 under Tuberville in the rivalry, has lost six of the last seven games after starting the season ranked in the top 10.

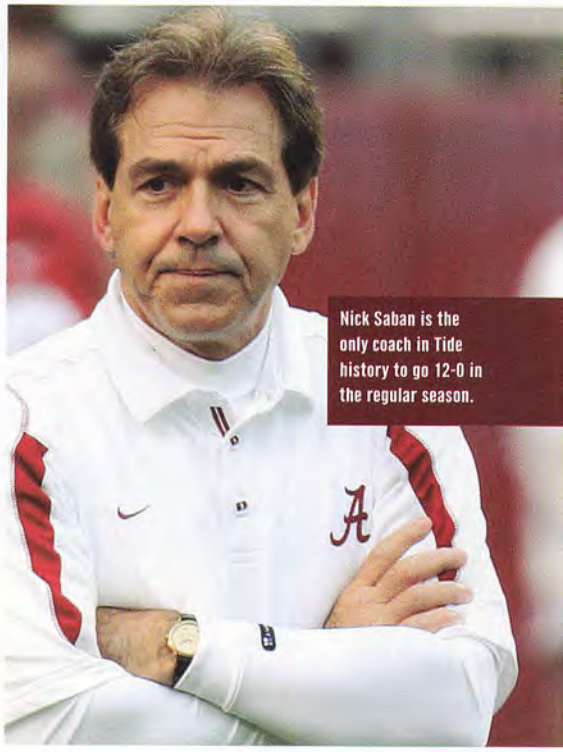
The Tide scored three touchdowns in the third quarter to let the fans start the celebration early and complete its first perfect regular season since 1994.

Auburn had been 6-0 in Tuscaloosa and allowed only 35 points in those games. Yet another streak crushed into oblivion with the one-sided performance. It was the most lopsided Iron bowl since Bear Bryant's 1962 group won 38-0.

The game was also 'Bama's first Iron Bowl shutout since a 17-0 win during the 1992 national championship season. None of the Tigers' six straight wins had been decided by more than 10 points and the collective margin was 47 points.

It was the kind of result the Tide was looking for upon hiring Saban two years ago: Somebody to wrest control of the state from Auburn and put the Tide back in the national title hunt.

Mark Ingram rushed for 64 yards and two touchdowns for the Tide. John Parker Wilson was 8-of-16 for 134 yards and a touchdown in his final home game. He drew a standing ovation when trotting off the field midway through the fourth quarter for backup Greg McElroy. **ALFB**



Nick Saban is the only coach in Tide history to go 12-0 in the regular season.

Antoine Caldwell

One of the country's best centers also is Alabama's undisputed leader on the Tide offensive line.

BY CHARITY SCOTT

The Alabama Crimson Tide has faced several difficult tests this season, and at each turn it has relied on strong performances from its most skilled and senior players.

For the offensive line, this is particularly important given its youth, and in this regard, the benefits of having senior Antoine Caldwell encouraging them to play well cannot be overestimated.

"Our offensive line has some real strong leadership that had affected the other players on our team with their toughness and tenacity and the way they compete and play," head coach Nick Saban said.

Caldwell said he and the team have learned to take the negative things they see and hear, both about their play in season, and coping with very high expectations after a fast start.

"It's only motivation to us," he said,

Caldwell said the offense has improved a lot this season, and it seemed that teams go after the offense more and more each week.

"Especially the last two or three weeks [of the season], they've done a lot of blitzing, and for the most part we've done a good job at picking them up," he said. "We just have to make sure we keep on doing that, and give J.P. enough time to get the ball to the receivers."

Always humble, Caldwell passed the credit for the offensive line's strong performance to the team's coaches.

"We've been really prepared for [games]. Specifically, my offensive line coach [Joe Pendry] does a great job with us preparing us during the week for what we're going to see," he said. "I think when we get out there on the field; it's kind of like practice. We've just been really prepared." ALFB

Rashad Johnson

An instinctive, physical force, Alabama's senior free safety is also the defensive team leader.

Few would dispute the fact that the Alabama Crimson Tide senior quarterback John Parker Wilson is the offensive team's leader.

On the defense, the hands-down leader is Rashad Johnson, a senior safety that essentially acts as the quarterback of the defense.

Tide head coach Nick Saban is quick to point out Johnson's strengths, both on defense and for his work on special teams, which is the role he played most often after he first walked on the team.

"He's instinctive, he's got really good range, he's got great understanding of football in general," Saban said. "And he's got good hands and good ball judgment. So all those combina-tions of things are going to put him in the right place to make plays a lot of the time."

One of the highlights of Johnson's season was the Tide's 36-0 shutout against Auburn.

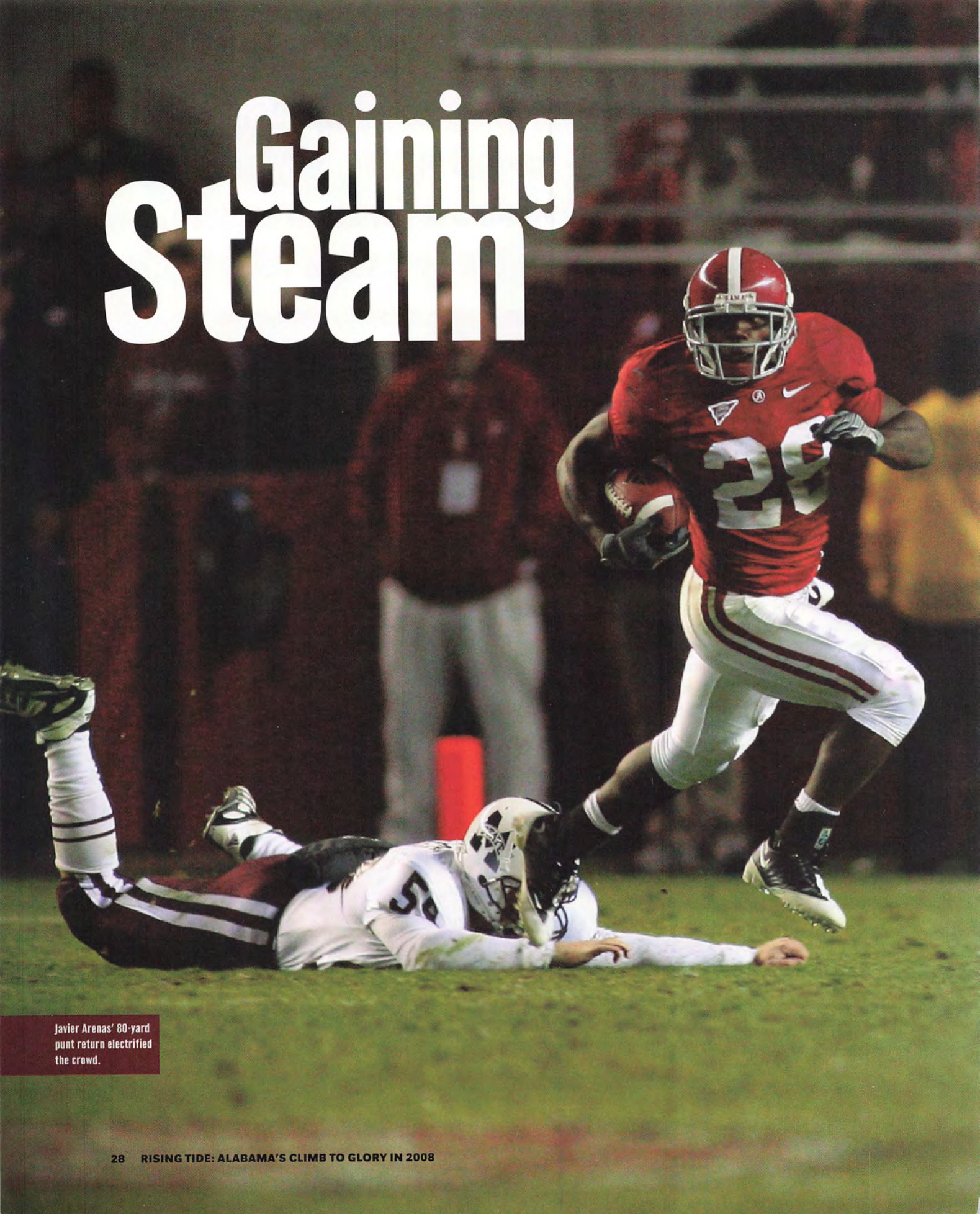
"It means a lot to earn the shutout," he said. "We were just trying to get better every week. We practiced hard and were able to finish the game."

Johnson said he was so focused on playing well, and finishing the season strong that he has not given any thought to the legacy he and the rest of the senior class is leaving behind them. But he has a good feeling about how future Tide fans will look on his graduating class.

"I really haven't thought about it," he said. "I definitely think it will be something great." ALFB

BY CHARITY SCOTT

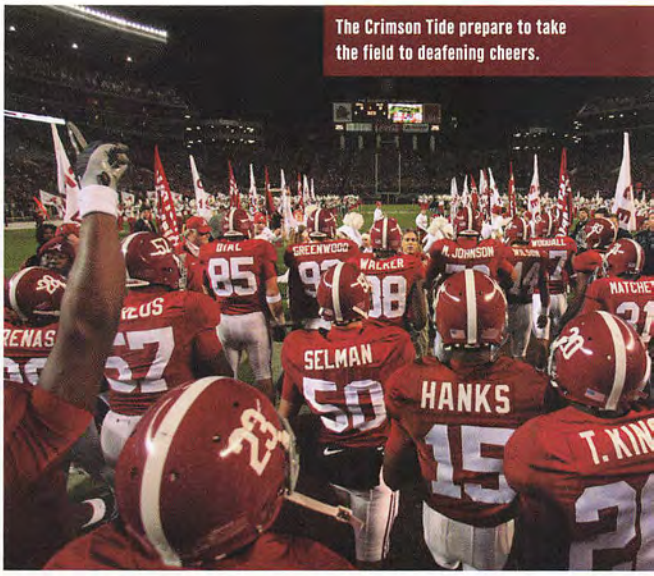
Gaining Steam



Javier Arenas' 80-yard punt return electrified the crowd.

			SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.1	NOV 15	5	7	10	10	32
MISS. STATE	UR	BRYANT-DENNY TUSCALOOSA	0	7	0	0	7

An easy victory over the Bulldogs and the SEC West in hand, Alabama has two hurdles remaining to reach Miami.



The Crimson Tide prepare to take the field to deafening cheers.

Javier Arenas squirted through a gaping hole toward the sideline and there was no catching him from there.

Or No. 1 Alabama, for that matter.

Arenas ran back a punt 80 yards for a touchdown and set up a score with another long return, helping the Crimson Tide roll to a 32-7 comeback win over Mississippi State on Saturday night."It's still early. We still got a long way to go," cautioned quarterback John Parker Wilson, who threw for two touchdowns and ran for a third. "But we've got a good group of guys here who can do it."

The Tide (11-0, 7-0 Southeastern Conference) scored the game's final 27 points to turn back a team that had given 'Bama fits the past two years.

Kareem Jackson blocked a punt in the end zone for a safety and Leigh Tiffin kicked three field goals to help keep Alabama on track for a perfect regular season leading up to a showdown with No. 3 Florida in the SEC championship game.

The Alabama defense smothered the Bulldogs, holding them to 164 yards.

to the Bulldogs' 2-yard line set up John Parker Wilson's 1-yard sneak. It was the Tide's first offensive touchdown against Mississippi State since the fourth quarter of the 2004 game, a span of some 210 minutes of play.

Mark Ingram added another 1-yard score in the fourth quarter.

The Tide turned in a workmanlike performance following an emotional overtime win at LSU that clinched the SEC West title, but still outgained Mississippi State 364-167. Alabama had only 212 yards entering the fourth.

Mississippi State (3-7, 1-5) had won the past two meetings with coach Sylvester Croom's alma matter. The Bulldogs, who were knocked out of contention for a second straight bowl trip, had also been the team to end Alabama's last regular-season reign over the rankings back in 1980 when Croom was a Tide assistant.

Arenas effectively wiped out any fears of a repeat 28 years later. He darted through a gaping hole and raced down the right sideline for his fifth career punt-return touchdown early in the second half to break David Palmer's school mark.

"Javy's second return probably changed the momentum of the game as much as anything," Tide coach Nick Saban said, calling it a "picture-perfect return" by the whole unit.

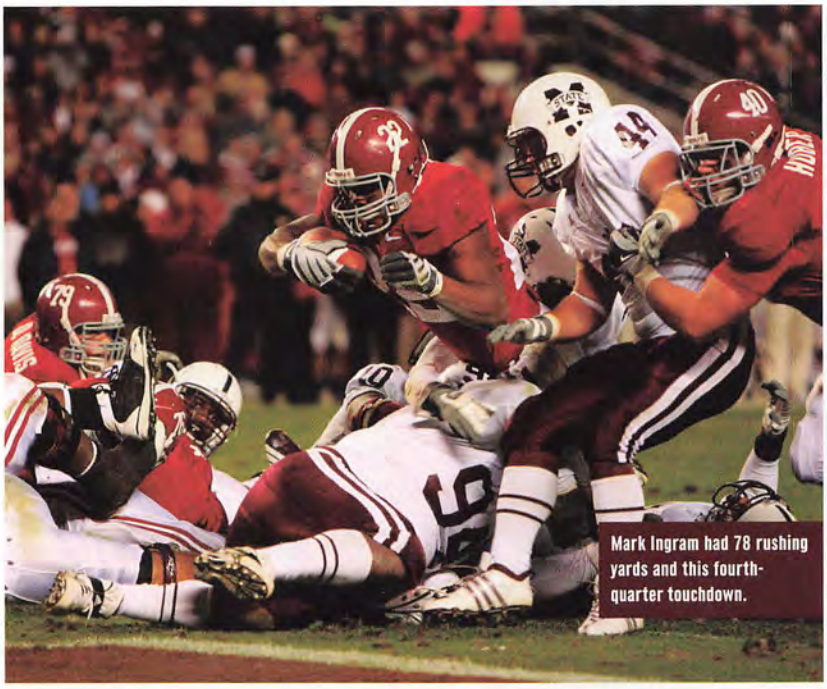
"We pretty much controlled the game after that."

Arenas gained a school-record 153 yards on six returns.

"My guys are out there blocking for me, just a huge wall there blocking for me," he said. "All of the guys set up a wall. I didn't make any moves."

Alabama trailed 7-5 when he turned in his first big runback and was in command after his second. His 46-yarder

"The first half we didn't play especially well," Saban said. "We made some mental errors on defense that were very costly – not like us. I thought we had a lot of energy, a lot of inten-



Mark Ingram had 78 rushing yards and this fourth-quarter touchdown.

Junior Glen Coffee had 71 of Alabama's 198 rushing yards.

BY THE NUMBERS

	ALA	MSU
YARDS RUSHING	198	35
Rushing Attempts	48	22
YARDS PASSING	166	132
Completions-Attempts	12-19	11-28
TOTAL YARDS	364	167
TURNOVERS	0	1
FIRST DOWNS	17	9
PENALTIES (YARDS)	5 (52)	5 (25)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 10:03 UA - Ball snapped through end zone
3 plays, 7 yards, TOP 1:30, UA 2 - MSU 0
01:43 UA - Leigh Tiffin 35 yd field goal
9 plays, 35 yards, TOP 4:39, UA 5 - MSU 0
2nd 10:19 MSU - Jamayel Smith 31 yd pass from Tyson Lee (Adam Carlson Kick)
7 plays, 78 yards, TOP 3:43, UA 5 - MSU 7
04:47 UA - John Parker Wilson 1 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
2 plays, 2 yards, TOP 0:42, UA 12 - MSU 7
3rd 12:14 UA - Javier Arenas 80 yd punt return (Leigh Tiffin kick)
0 plays, 0 yards, TOP 0:00, UA 19 - MSU 7
3:51 UA - Leigh Tiffin 34 yd field goal
8 plays, 35 yards, TOP 3:23, UA 22 - MSU 7
4th 11:14 UA - Leigh Tiffin 35 yd field goal
12 plays, 71 yards, TOP 6:21, UA 25 - MSU 7
07:58 UA - Mark Ingram 1 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
3 plays, 72 yards, TOP 0:58, UA 32 - MSU 7

sity, but we didn't play very smart."

Wilson completed 10 of 17 passes for 148 yards and set up scores with long passes to Julio Jones and Brad Smelley. Ingram ran for 78 yards and Glen Coffee had 71 for the Tide.

Mississippi State took the lead on Jamayel Smith's 31-yard pass from Tyson Lee five minutes into the second quarter. The Bulldogs couldn't produce much else offensively.

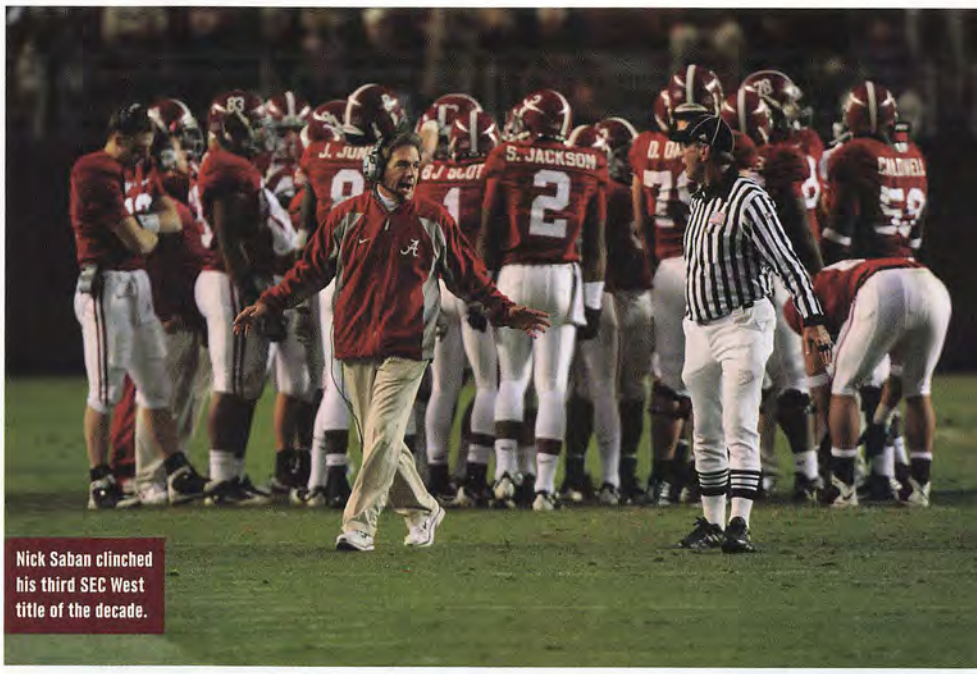
Lee completed 11 of 28 passes for 132 yards while the league's top run defense held Anthony Dixon to 26 yards on 11 carries. That didn't leave much margin for error on special teams.

"We gave up 16 points in the kicking game, and that's pretty much the ballgame," Croom said. "We can't give those guys points. You can't give them anything."

Croom said defensive tackle Jessie Bowman appears lost for the season with a torn quadriceps muscle. The loss ended Mississippi State's postseason hopes. Linebacker Dominic Douglas figures there's plenty of blame to go around.

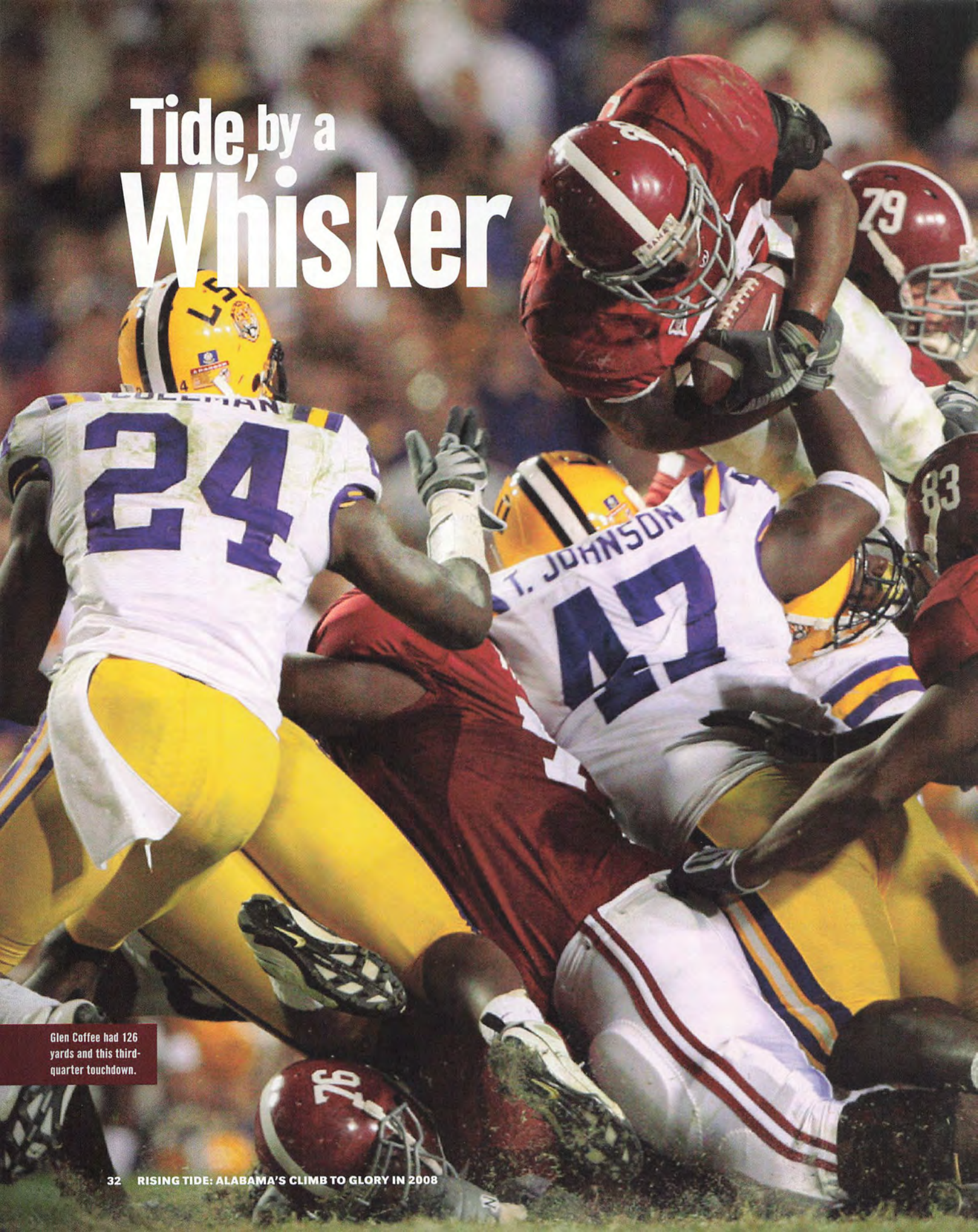
"We couldn't get anything started, passing or running, offense or defense," linebacker Douglas said. "We tried our best to stop them, but they kept kicking field goals that added to the score. We have to play better than we have been playing, and that is the bottom line."

Alabama's lone remaining game before the Gators is against struggling Auburn in two weeks. **ALFB**



Nick Saban clinched his third SEC West title of the decade.

Tide, by a Whisker



Glen Coffee had 126 yards and this third-quarter touchdown.

			SCORE BY QUARTERS (OT)					
ALABAMA	No.1	NOV 8	7	7	7	0	(6)	27
LSU	No.16	TIGER BATON ROUGE, LA.	14	0	0	7	(0)	21

Rashad Johnson grabs three interceptions as the Crimson Tide need overtime to escape Baton Rouge with a victory.

Tough defense and hard hits ruled the day in Baton Rouge.

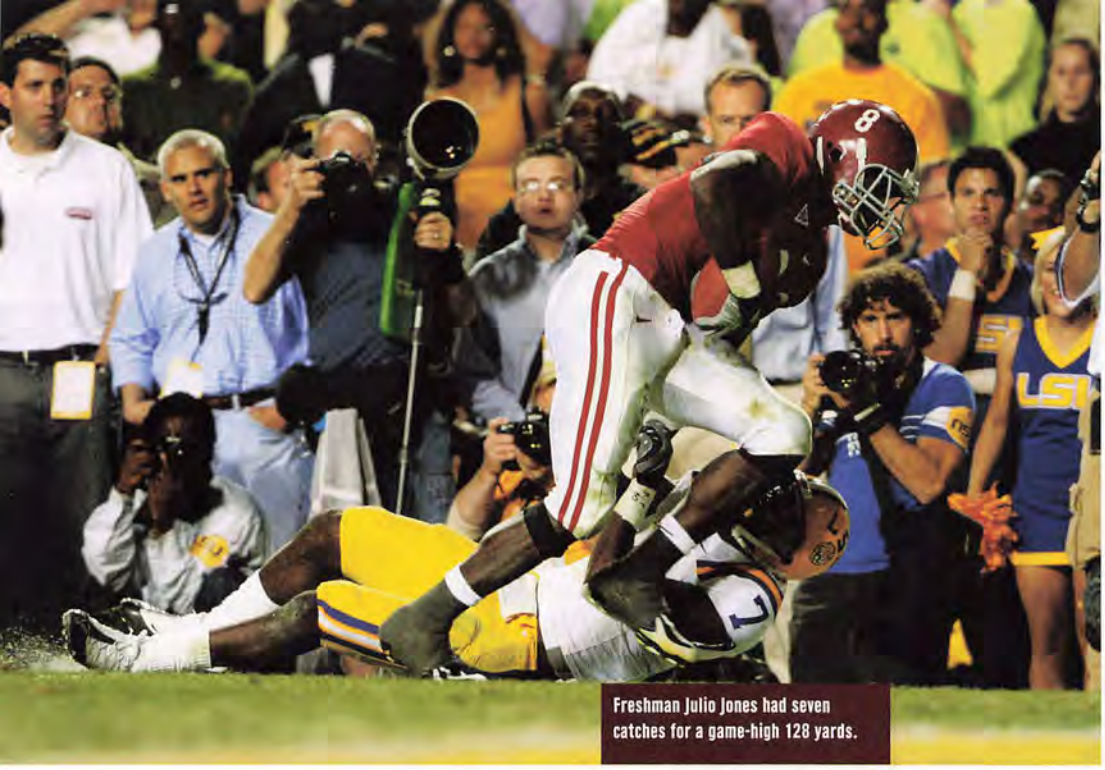
Alabama used Nick Saban's long-awaited return to the Bayou to set a date in Atlanta.

As if the lead up wasn't dramatic enough, the No. 1 Crimson Tide needed an overtime session to edge the defending national champion Tigers 27-21 and clinch the SEC West at a raucous, record Tiger Stadium.

The win snapped a five-game losing streak to the Tigers and gave Saban his first win against his former team in front of 93,039, the largest crowd in the history of Tiger Stadium.

Up next for the Tide? Mississippi State and Auburn, both at Bryant-Denny Stadium, and then a huge matchup against Eastern Division champion Florida in the SEC Championship Game on Dec. 6 in Atlanta's Georgia Dome.

After Leigh Tiffin's potential 29-yard game-winning field goal was blocked in the waning seconds of regulation, safety Rashad Johnson recorded his third interception of the game in



Freshman Julio Jones had seven catches for a game-high 128 yards.

The Tide's vaunted run defense allowed 154 rushing yards in the first half, struggling to contain the Tiger tailbacks between the hashes. After Alabama took an early 7-0 advantage, the defense gave up two touchdowns in 12 seconds to surrender the lead and the momentum.

"My hats off to our players and the way the competed, but I wasn't really pleased with the way we played in the first half," Saban said. "We turned the ball over three times and missed a field goal ... I thought we played a lot better in the second half."

The Tide matched LSU 7-7 in the second half. Despite punting away most of its possessions, Alabama didn't turn the ball over again. The Tide grinded out the war of attrition to reach overtime and outlast the Tigers.

"For the first time this season, we've had to come from behind, play the whole game and win in overtime," Wilson said. "Offensively, we didn't play very well the whole game. The defense played great, and we were able to win."

Johnson led the defensive harassment of redshirt freshman Lee. Johnson picked off Lee three times, returning his second 54 yards for a touchdown in the second quarter, while the last one in overtime sent Lee and the rest of the LSU offense off the field for good. Johnson's three interceptions set the single-game Alabama record. Lee broke a college football record himself, but one he'd rather not have -- as Johnson's pick-six marked Lee's sixth interception returned for a touchdown this season.

overtime to set up Alabama's game-winning touchdown.

Johnson snagged LSU quarterback Jarrett Lee's fourth interception of the night in the corner of the end zone to end the Tiger's only overtime possession.

John Parker Wilson rushed for two touchdowns.

Quarterback John Parker Wilson connected with Julio Jones for 24 yards on Alabama's first play in overtime to set up first-and-goal from the 1. Two plays later, Wilson punched it in on a keeper to quiet the crowd and hand the Tide a six-point victory.

"After that interception, coach Saban said 'let's take a shot,'" Wilson said. "So of course we threw it to Julio Jones. He made a great play. It was a back shoulder ball; (he) made a great adjustment."

Jones had 128 yards on seven catches, including the all-important one in overtime, but the Tide relied on a strong ground game to stay in the physical game. Glen Coffee rushed for 126 yards and a touchdown on 26 carries. Wilson played the clean-up role deep in Tiger territory, accounting for two 1-yard rushing touchdowns.

Alabama had to battle back from a shaky offensive start to keep its undefeated record intact.

Offensively, seven of the Tide's first-half possessions failed to produce points, resulting in three punts, two fumbles, an interception and a missed field goal. Alabama did convert the other two drives into touchdowns to keep the game even at 14 heading into the intermission.

Nick Saban salutes the Crimson Tide faithful who made the trip to Louisiana.

BY THE NUMBERS

	ALA	LSU
YARDS RUSHING	138	201
Rushing Attempts	37	46
YARDS PASSING	215	181
Completions-Attempts	15-31	13-34
TOTAL YARDS	353	382
TURNOVERS	3	4
FIRST DOWNS	16	17
PENALTIES (YARDS)	2 (24)	5 (32)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 08:23 UA - John Parker Wilson 1 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
4 plays, 15 yards, TOP 1:43, UA 7 - LSU 0
06:21 LSU - Demetrius Byrd 30 yd pass from Jarrett Lee (Colt David kick)
6 plays, 54 yards, TOP 2:14, UA 7 - LSU 7
05:57 LSU - Charles Scott 30 yd run (Colt David kick)
2 plays, 30 yards, TOP 0:12, UA 7 - LSU 14
2nd 04:33 UA -Rashad Johnson 54 yd interception return (Leigh Tiffin kick)
0 plays, 0 yards, TOP 0:00, UA 14 - LSU 14
3rd 08:14 UA - Glen Coffee 3 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
7 plays, 69 yards, TOP 3:12, UA 21 - LSU 14
4th 06:12 LSU - Charles Scot 1 yd run (Colt David)
14 plays, 74 yards, TOP 6:02, UA 21 - LSU 21
Overtime 00:00 UA - John Parker Wilson 1 yd run
3 plays, 25 yards, TOP 0:00, UA 27 - LSU 21

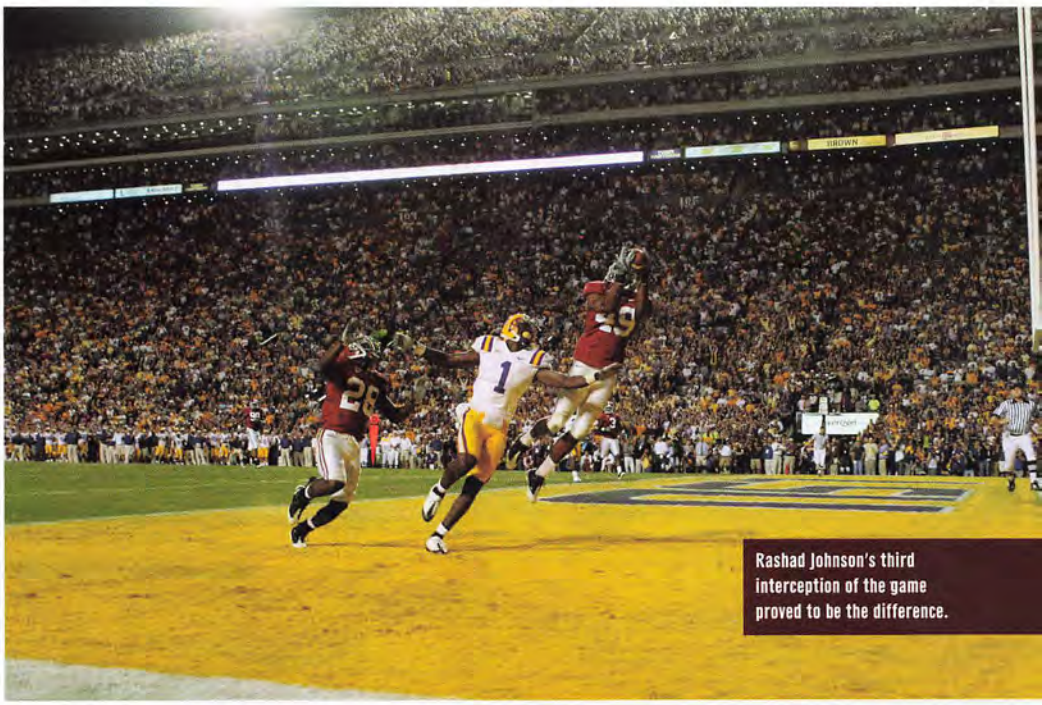
Alabama missed on a late opportunity to stave off overtime and seal the game.

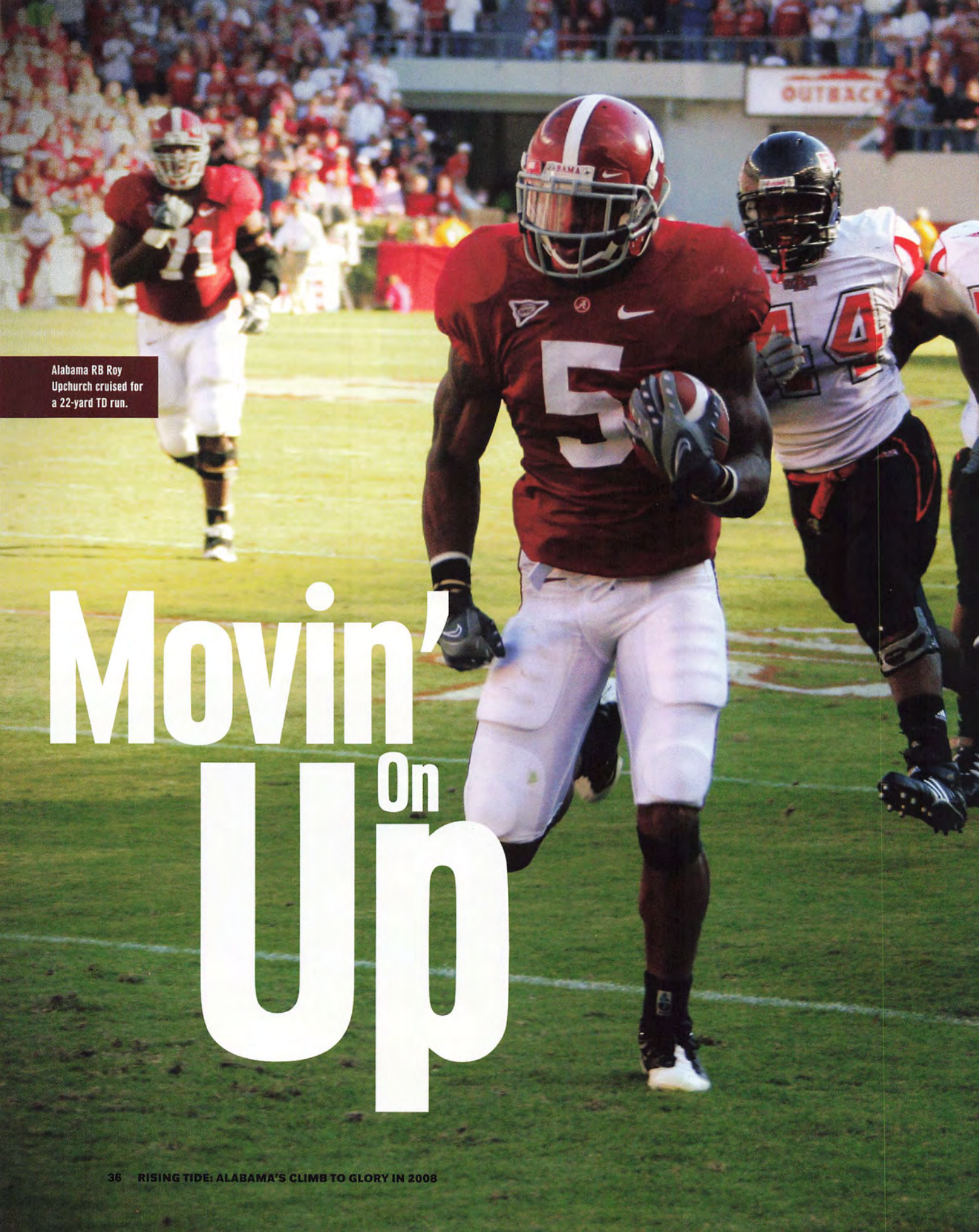
LSU knotted the score at 21 on a 1-yard run by Charles Scott with 6:12 left in the game. The two teams then traded punts, draining the clock in the process. Alabama got the ball back with just under two minutes remaining and orchestrated a seven-play drive to set up a potential game-winning kick with three seconds remaining. But LSU defensive tackle Ricky Jean-Francois blocked Leigh Tiffin's 29-yard attempt to send the game into overtime.

The win pushed Alabama to 10-0 (6-0 in the SEC West) as the Tide avoided the quick-loss pitfall in its first week ranked No. 1 that several top-ranked teams have been plagued by this season.

Saban continued to belabor that point that rankings and other external factors, such as once-undefeated Penn State's loss to Iowa Saturday, are irrelevant to his team.

"We are at about 19,000 feet. The mountain is 26,000 feet, and the air is changing a bit." Saban said. "The air is a little rarer, and you have to change how you breathe sometimes, but you still have to focus on the task at hand. Because of that, if you slip up and don't focus on what you are supposed to, the consequences can be devastating, even more so than when you are at 7,000 feet."**ALFB**


Rashad Johnson's third interception of the game proved to be the difference.



Alabama RB Roy Upchurch cruised for a 22-yard TD run.

Movin' On Up

		SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.2	7	7	14	7	35
ARK. STATE	UR	0	0	0	0	0

NOV 1
BRYANT-DENNY TUSCALOOSA

Homecoming is a happy one for the Crimson Tide, which celebrates with a one-sided victory – and a step up?

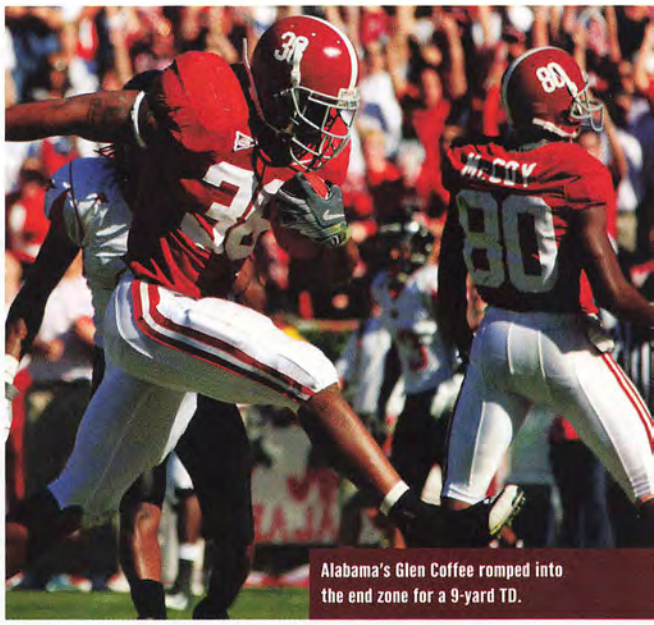
No. 2 Alabama produced a shutout, a 100-yard rusher and a defensive touchdown in a game that would have been easy to overlook.

What the Crimson Tide didn't have: a letdown.

Mark Ingram ran for 113 yards and two touchdowns on 12 carries and Rashad Johnson scored on a 32-yard interception return in the Tide's 35-0 victory over Arkansas State on Saturday.

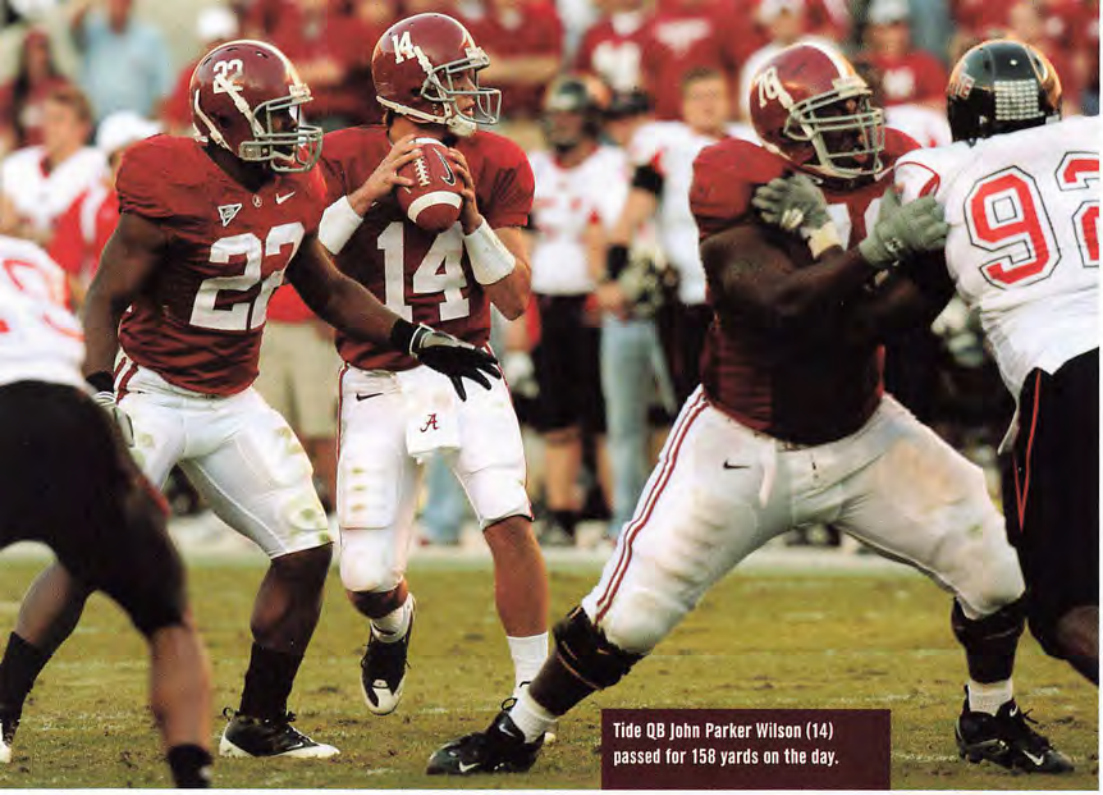
Alabama (9-0) turned in a dominant all-around performance to set the stage for next week's showdown at No. 15 LSU in the type of game that had been a stumbling block for recent Tide teams.

Think Louisiana-Monroe, another Sun Belt Conference team that upset 'Bama last season.



Alabama's Glen Coffee romped into the end zone for a 9-yard TD.

"We're starting to develop that attitude of be as good as you can be, don't play to your opponent, all those kind of things," said Tide coach Nick Saban, who is set to face his former team at LSU.



Tide QB John Parker Wilson (14) passed for 158 yards on the day.

Did somebody say LSU? The team Saban once led to a national championship?

"I haven't really thought about it yet," he said of his return to Baton Rouge, "but it ain't going to be about me."

Well, not just about him.

Alabama, which can clinch the Southeastern Conference Western Division title with a win over LSU, managed its first shutout since a 17-0 victory over Mississippi State on Nov. 5, 2005. The Tide allowed only 158 yards on 54 plays against Arkansas State (4-4), which had scored 83 points against Texas Southern and upset Texas A&M earlier this season.

The Tide took its opening drive 89 yards on 16 plays for a touchdown to put aside any fears of a letdown like the one against Louisiana-Monroe. That game might have made it easier to focus in on this one.

"It's pretty easy, especially compared to last year when we lost games that we should have won," said tailback Glen Coffee, who scored on a 9-yard run.

Ingram scored on runs of 5 and 17 yards in the second half for the freshman's first 100-yard game after managing just 1 yard on four carries against Tennessee last week.

"Mark Ingram, who has struggled a little bit the last couple of weeks, sure did look good today," Saban said.

Coffee rushed for 56 yards and scored to cap that opening drive before sitting out the second half. Saban said he sustained a biceps bruise but didn't expect him to miss practice time.

John Parker Wilson completed 15 of 28 passes for 158 yards and was intercepted once.

Wilson's 12 consecutive completions dating back to last week's game at Tennessee tied Andrew Zow's school record set in 2000. The streak ended when Julio Jones couldn't hold onto his second pass attempt.

The final score could have been even more lopsided, but the Tide was

Alabama RB Mark Ingram piled up 113 yards on 12 carries and two TDs.

Alabama governor Bob Riley crowned Caroline Gwaltney UA's homecoming queen.

BY THE NUMBERS

	ASU	ALA
YARDS RUSHING	91	205
Rushing Attempts	37	36
YARDS PASSING	67	152
Completions-Attempts	8-17	15-28
TOTAL YARDS	158	357
TURNOVERS	1	1
FIRST DOWNS	11	21
PENALTIES (YARDS)	7 (73)	3 (33)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 04:23 UA - Glen Coffee 9 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
16 plays, 89 yards, TOP 7:02, ASU 0 - UA 7
2nd 08:54 UA - Rashad Johnson 32 yd interception return (Leigh Tiffin kick)
ASU 0 - UA 14
3rd 13:37 UA - Roy Upchurch 22 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
4 plays, 70 yards, TOP 1:23, ASU 0 - UA 21
02:20 UA - Mark Ingram 5 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
7 plays, 48 yards, TOP 3:38, ASU 0 - UA 28
4th 04:37 UA - Mark Ingram 17 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
7 plays, 45 yards, TOP 3:03, ASU 0 - UA 35

turned back four times on trips into Arkansas State territory, including an interception on the goal line and a missed field goal.

Arkansas State crossed midfield twice in the fourth quarter but the drives ended with a failed fourth-down play and a sack on third down.

"We did some good things, we just didn't do enough of them, and they showed why they are the No. 2 team in the country," Red Wolves coach Steve Roberts said. "They are a very, very powerful and very physical football team."

Quarterback Corey Leonard passed for just 67 yards and was intercepted once and sacked four times, seldom getting time to find open receivers. Reggie Arnold gained 72 yards on 15 carries for the Red Wolves.

They converted just two of 12 third-down plays.

"When we would put one or two plays together, when it came to a big first down or something like that, they really would come after us and overpower us a lot of the times," Leonard said.

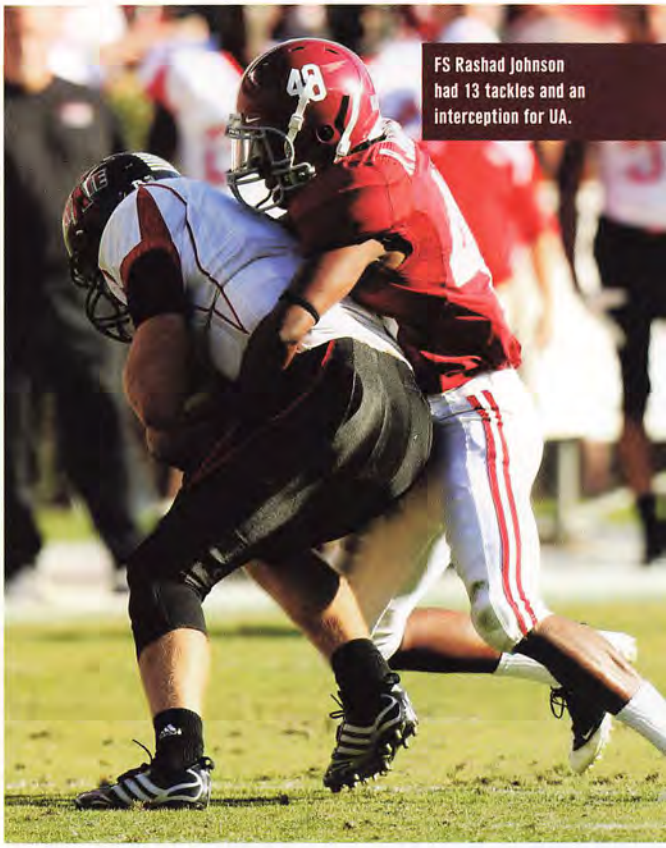
The Tide led only 14-0 at halftime but breezed down the field to open the third quarter. Upchurch's 22-yard run capped a four-play, 70-yard drive after Ingram tallied 43 yards on two runs.

Johnson, meanwhile, spearheaded the dominant defensive performance. He had 13 tackles and 2.5 stops for losses besides the interception return that made it 14-0 midway through the second quarter. It was the Tide's fourth defensive touchdown of the season.

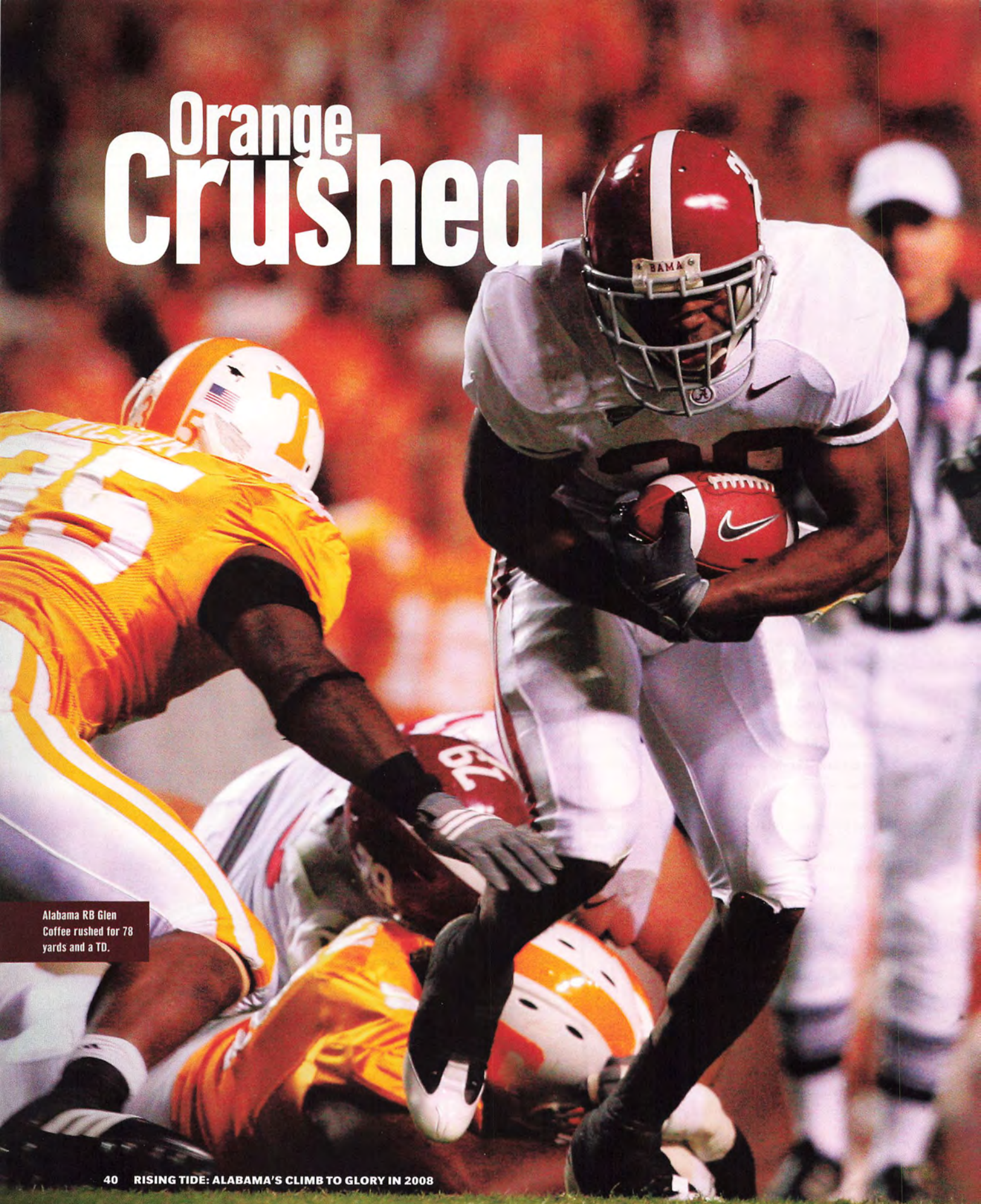
"It felt great," Johnson said. "I've never scored before. It was a big play. We needed some momentum, and it boosted the offense, too. I looked up, saw it, reeled it in and then all I saw was the sideline."

And now it's on to LSU. It's OK, Alabama. You can mention those three letters.

"We hadn't looked or talked about LSU at all," Wilson said. "Now we can." **ALFB**


FS Rashad Johnson had 13 tackles and an interception for UA.

Orange Crushed



Alabama RB Glen Coffee rushed for 78 yards and a TD.

		SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.2	6	7	9	7	29
TENNESSEE	UR	3	0	0	6	9

OCT 25
NEYLAND KNOXVILLE, TENN.

Tennessee's struggling offense and soon-to-be departed coach are no match for a fired-up Crimson Tide on Rocky Top.

Alabama coach Nick Saban was all smiles after the UT win.

Alabama's national title resume got a bit stronger Saturday night, and Phil Fulmer's seat just got a little hotter.

No. 2 Alabama continued its road-game dominance and kept its BCS hopes alive Saturday with a 29-9 victory over Tennessee in front of a sold-out crowd of 106,138 at Neyland Stadium.

Receiving criticism about finishing games from the public and head coach Nick Saban alike, the Crimson Tide (8-0, 5-0 SEC) fanned 29 points fairly evenly over four quarters. After struggling to close games in its most recent three-game stint, the Tide outscored its opponent in the second half for the first time since the Arkansas game.

"He harped on [finishing] at half time, and he's been harping on it the last couple games," center Antoine Caldwell said of Saban. "We finally just took it upon ourselves to finally put a complete game together. We scored points in the second half, and that was huge to put the game away. The defense played lights out today. It was a total team effort."

Alabam's defense held talented Vol Eric Berry in check throughout.

quick 3-0 lead. After receiving the opening kick off, the Tide strung together an 11-play drive ending in a 39-yd Leigh Tiffin field goal to get on the board first.

After forcing a Tennessee three-and-out on the ensuing drive, Alabama committed one of two special team miscues that let the Vols hang around early.

Refusing to signal for a fair catch inside the 10-yard line, junior Javier Arenas tracked down a sailing 54-yard punt by All-SEC kicker Britton Colquitt. LaMarcus Thompson jarred the ball loose when he hit the backpedaling Arenas, and teammate Dennis Rogan recovered it at the Alabama 5-yard line.

Arenas and the Crimson Tide de-

The Tide manufactured several long drives, scoring touchdowns on drives of 66, 79 and 80 yards.

John Parker Wilson finished 17-of-24 for 188 yards and freshman wide out Julio Jones hauled in a career-high six catches for 103 yards. Despite the emphasis of the aerial game (nine players recorded receptions), Alabama scored all three of its touchdowns on the ground.

Glen Coffee, Roy Upchurch and John Parker Wilson each reached the end zone. Upchurch sliced through the Tennessee line to lead the rushing attack with 86 yards on 14 carries.

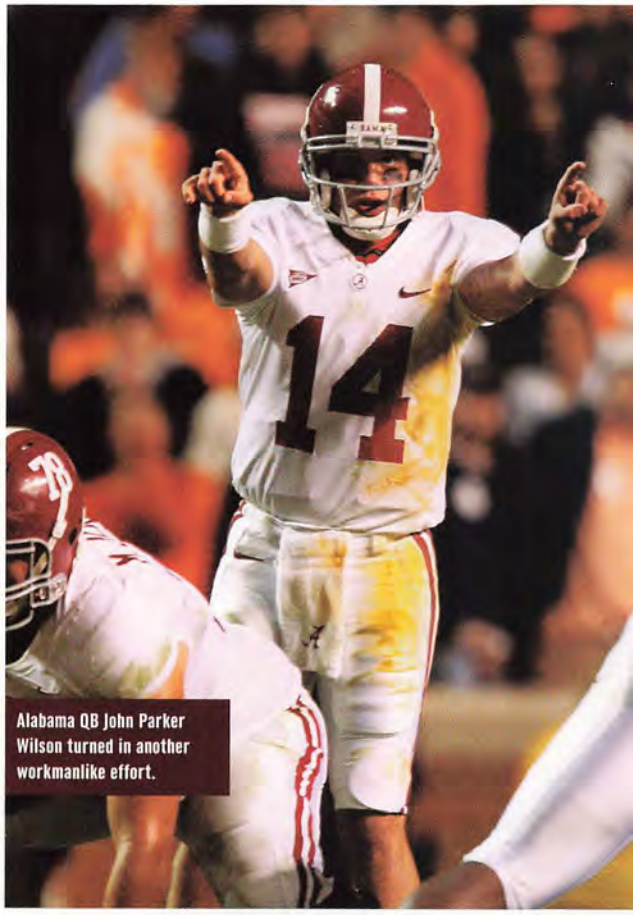
"Those running backs did really well," Wilson said. "We were able to mix in the pass and stay really balanced and come out with a good attack. With the way our defense played tonight, if we just kept the ball and didn't turn it over, we we're going to win the game."

The defense didn't miss a beat without the injured nose guard Terrence Cody, the 365-pound anchor of the SEC's best run defense who was sidelined with an MCL sprain. Josh Chapman, Marcel Dareus and Lorenzo Washington shuffled in to fill the void and stuffed the Tennessee run. The Vols managed just 36 rushing yards on 21 attempts.

The Volunteers converted just two of its 11 possession into points and had more punting yards, 306, than total offense, 173.

"I've never been prouder of our team, our players, the way they competed in the game," Saban said. "This is the best we've played since the Clemson game. We played a complete game today."

After trailing for the first time all season last week against Ole Miss, Alabama executed a crisp opening drive to take a



Alabama QB John Parker Wilson turned in another workmanlike effort.

Alabama WR Julio Jones caught six passes for 103 yards against the Vols.

BY THE NUMBERS

	ALA	UT
YARDS RUSHING	178	36
Rushing Attempts	43	21
YARDS PASSING	188	137
Completions-Attempts	17-24	16-28
TOTAL YARDS	366	173
TURNOVERS	1	0
FIRST DOWNS	23	10
PENALTIES (YARDS)	3 (35	7 (60)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 10:18 UA - Leigh Tiffin 39 yd field goal
11 plays, 50 yards, TOP 4:42, UA 3 - UT 0
06:28 UT - Daniel Lincoln 31 yd field goal
4 plays, -9 yards, TOP 1:34, UA 3 - UT 3
01:37 UA - Leigh Tiffin 43 yd field goal
5 plays, 21 yards, TOP 2:00, UA 6 - UT 3
2nd 02:41 UA - Glen Coffee 3 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
6 plays, 66 yards, TOP 3:03, UA 13 - UT 3
3rd 10:28 UA - Leigh Tiffin 30 yd field goal
6 plays, 20 yards, TOP 3:16, UA 16 - UT 3
01:38 UA - John Parker Wilson 1 yd run (John Parker Wilson pass failed)
12 plays, 79 yards, TOP 6:25, UA 22 - UT 3
4th 09:43 UA - Roy Upchurch 4 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
8 plays, 80 yards, TOP 4:31, UA 29 - UT 3
07:26 UT - Josh Briscoe 10 yd pass from Nick Stephens (Nick Stephens pass failed)
7 plays, 63 yards, TOP 2:07, UA 29 - UT 9

fense made a strong stand to keep the Vols off the checkered turf. Capped by a 7-yard sack by safety Rashad Johnson, Tennessee's four-play, negative-nine yard red zone drive ended in a Daniel Lincoln 31-yard chip shot to tie the game, 3-3.

Two drives later, Alabama capitalized on another Tiffin field goal, this time a 43-yarder, to take a 6-3 lead.

Later in the second quarter, Alabama was forced to punt from its own 12-yard line. Tennessee running back Montario Hardesty blocked the kick and Tennessee started its drive on the Tide's 32-yard line.

Again, the Alabama defense withstood, forcing the Vols to lose three yards that resulted in a missed 51-yard field goal attempt.

The failed field goal reset the field position as Alabama took over on its own 34-yard line. Jones caught consecutive passes for 49 yards to set up four-straight runs by Coffee, who punched it in the end zone from 3 yards out.

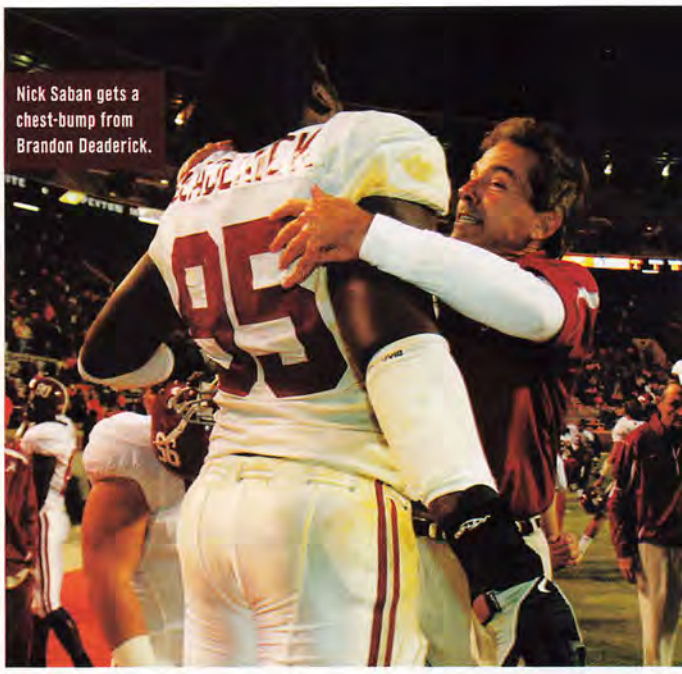
Alabama took the 13-3 lead into the locker room.

Tiffin booted another field goal on the Tide's opening drive of the second half to push the lead to 16-3. On its next possession, Alabama drove 79 yards on 12 plays for an Upchurch touchdown. Alabama failed on the two-point conversion but tacked on seven more points early in the fourth on Upchurch's touchdown.

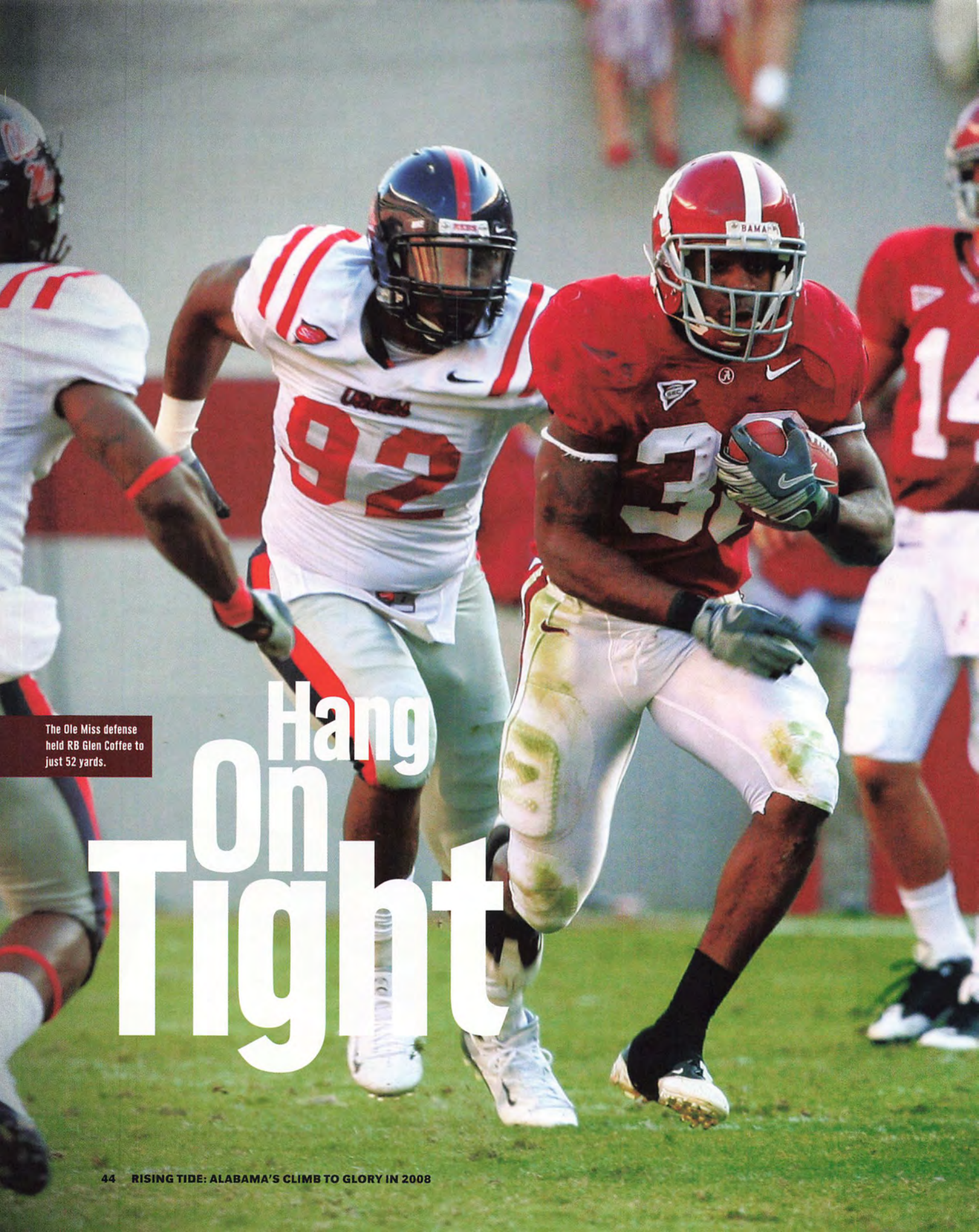
Tennessee notched a meaningless touchdown with 7:26 remaining to set the final score at 29-9.

The 20-point victory continued Alabama's dominance on the road. Including the neutral-site Clemson game, Alabama has outscored its opponents a combined 153-63 on the road.

The loss dropped a reeling Tennessee to 3-5 (1-4 SEC) and to the bottom of the East. Just one year removed from a Tennessee trip to the SEC Championship game, rumors are swirling about the fate of head coach Phil Fulmer after the uneven start. **ALFB**



Nick Saban gets a chest-bump from Brandon Deaderick.

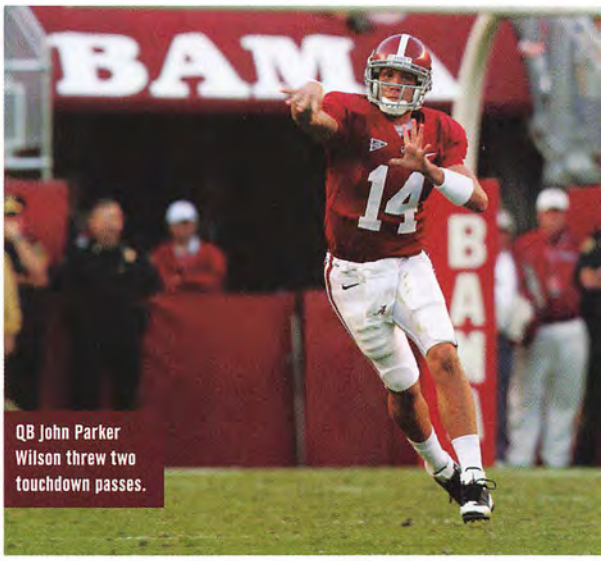


Hang On Tight

The Ole Miss defense held RB Glen Coffee to just 52 yards.

			SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.2	OCT 18	7	17	0	0	24
OLE MISS	UR	BRYANT-DENNY TUSCALOOSA	3	0	7	10	20

The Crimson Tide starts fast, but needs a fourth-quarter defensive stand to turn back upset-minded Ole Miss.



QB John Parker Wilson threw two touchdown passes.

Turns out No. 2 Alabama plays pretty well from behind. It's playing from ahead that gave the Crimson Tide fits Saturday.

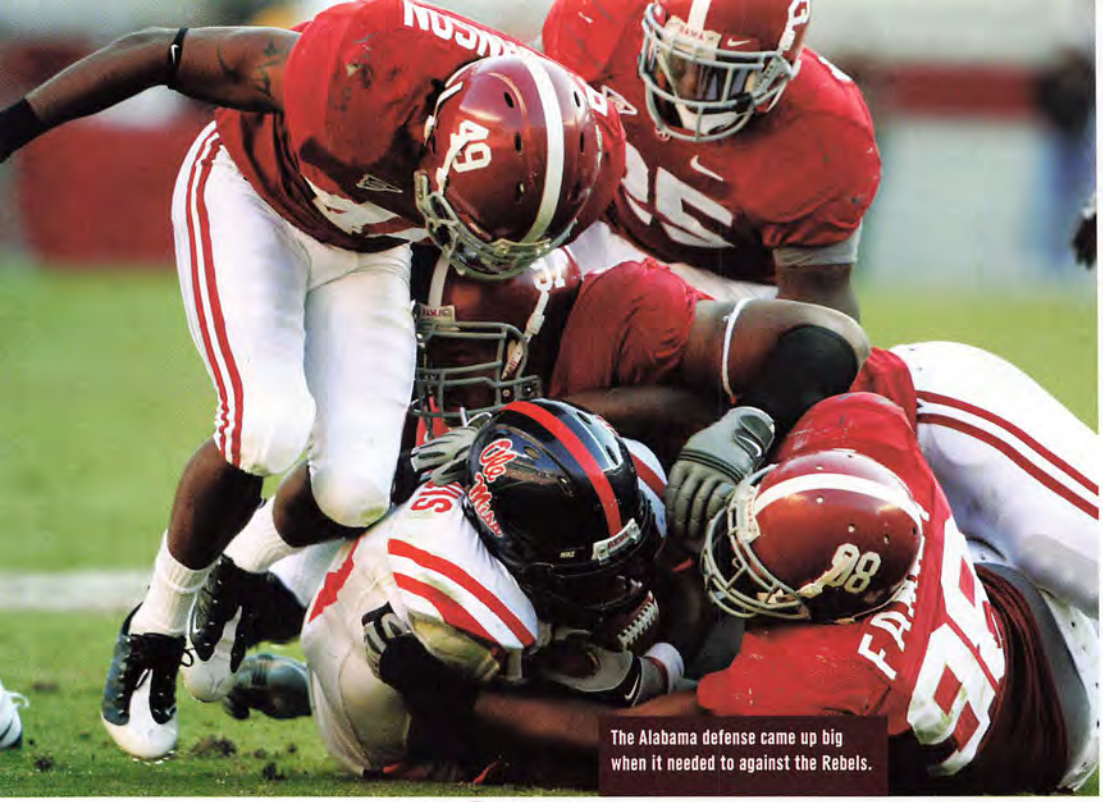
'Bama surged to a big halftime lead after trailing for the first time all season, then let most of it slip away before coming up with a late defensive stand to hold off Mississippi for a 24-20 victory.

"That hadn't happened to us yet this year," quarterback John Parker Wilson said. "It was good to see us respond."

In the end, it was another down-to-the-wire win for the Tide (7-0, 4-0 Southeastern Conference) over the Rebels, who dominated the second half and still had a shot at the upset approaching the final minute.

This one wasn't decided until Jevan Snead's fourth-and-5 pass to Dexter McCluster, who was well covered by Javier Arenas, fell incomplete with 61 seconds to play.

The Tide has won its past two games by a total of seven points since rising to No. 2 with a series of easy victories. It was also another in a series of close calls with Ole Miss



The Alabama defense came up big when it needed to against the Rebels.

(3-4, 1-3). Alabama had won each of the past three meetings by a field goal, but holds a commanding 23-1 advantage in Tuscaloosa.

"I said it all week long: Ole Miss is really a good football team," Alabama coach Nick Saban said. "I believed it. I don't know if our players believed it, but I think they do a fantastic job and they've got good players."

Wilson threw for a season-high 219 yards and a pair of touchdowns and helped Alabama race to 24 straight points after facing a 3-0 deficit and giving up points in the opening quarter for the first time all season.

Then Ole Miss answered with 17 straight points and closed to within 24-20 on Joshua Shene's 35-yard field goal with 6:09 left.

The Tide pushed the ball across midfield on its next possession aiming to put the game away but the drive stalled. P.J. Fitzgerald's short punt gave Ole Miss the ball at its own 24 with 3:03 left.

Snead ran it on the first three plays, including once for a 5-yard gain when a pass that was batted right back into his arms by Bobby Greenwood. Brandon Deaderick then had a sack before Snead threw an incompletion and hit McCluster for a 10-yard gain to set up the fourth-down play.

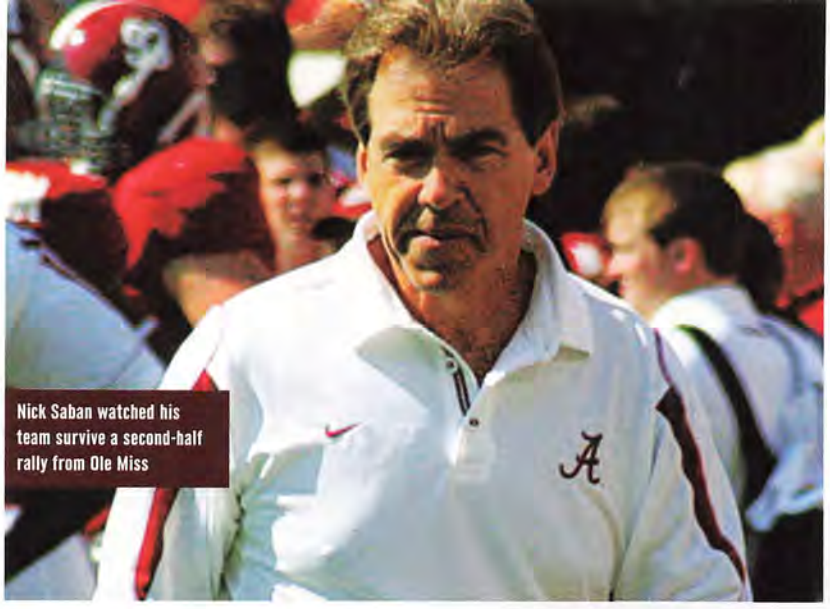
"I felt like I had to get rid of the ball, and unfortunately I wasn't able to get it where I wanted to go with it," Snead said.

The Rebels were going for their second road upset of a top-five team after beating Florida three weeks earlier.

"The reason we're able to play in this environment is you reach back to a game like Florida," Ole Miss coach Houston Nutt said. "A lot of teams can't stay on the field with Alabama, a lot of teams."

Nutt's team cashed in on two big gambles on the opening drive of the second half to make it 24-10. Snead

RB Mark Ingram finished the game with 72 yards and a rushing touchdown.



Nick Saban watched his team survive a second-half rally from Ole Miss

BY THE NUMBERS

	MISS	ALA
YARDS RUSHING	158	107
Rushing Attempts	34	34
YARDS PASSING	201	219
Completions-Attempts	17-33	16-25
TOTAL YARDS	359	326
TURNOVERS	3	2
FIRST DOWNS	14	15
PENALTIES (YARDS)	4 (27)	6 (55)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 05:25 MISS - Joshua Shene 25 yd field goal
7 plays, 72 yards, TOP 3:23, UA 0 - MISS 3
04:10 UA - Marquis Maze 26 yd pass from John Parker Wilson (Leigh Tiffin kick)
4 plays, 73 plays, TOP 1:15, UA 7 - MISS 3
2nd 06:34 UA - Mark Ingram 2 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
11 plays, 60 yards, TOP 5:11, UA 14 - MiSS 3
04:45 UA - Leigh Tiffin 41 yd field goal
4 plays, 8 yards, TOP 1:49, UA 17 - MISS 3
02:51 UA - Mike McCoy 30 yd pass from John Parker Wilson (Leigh Tiffin kick)
2 plays, 26 yards, TOP 0:45, UA 24 - MISS 3
3rd 10:37 MISS - Jason Cook 9 yd pass from Rob Park (Joshua Shene kick)
10 plays, 52 yards, TOP 4:23, UA 24 - MISS 10
4th 09:27 MISS - Shay Hodge 17 yd pass from Jevan Snead (Joshua Shene kick)
5 plays, 34 yards, TOP 1:41, UA 24 - MISS 17
06:09 MISS - Joshua Shene 35 yd field goal
7 plays, 34 yards, TOP 2:01, UA 24 - MISS 20

ran up the middle for 17 yards on fourth-and-4. Then, Ole Miss faked a field goal, with blocking back Jason Cook taking a shovel pass from holder Rob Park for a 9-yard touchdown.

"It's something that we've had for a while and could never find the right opportunity to run it," Cook said. "Finally the opportunity presents itself and next thing you know I'm in the end zone for the first time in my career, so it was pretty cool."

A later fourth-down try in Alabama territory didn't pay off, when Don'ta Hightower stuffed Davis on fourth-and-inches late in the third.

After the teams exchanged fumbles in the fourth quarter, Snead hit Shay Hodge for a 17-yard touchdown with 9:27 left.

Alabama went three-and-out to give Ole Miss the ball back near midfield, but the Rebels had to settle for Shene's kick.

Wilson was 16-of-25 passing and was intercepted once. Mark Ingram ran for 73 yards and Glen Coffee was held to 52 yards on 13 carries and lost a fumble.

The Tide has the league's top running game and rush defense, but was outgained 158-107 on the ground.

Snead was 16-for-31 for 192 yards.

Alabama got rolling quickly after the early deficit.

Wilson hit Marquis Maze on a perfectly thrown fade route for a 26-yard touchdown to start it. The Tide then added Ingram's 2-yard touchdown midway through the second quarter with 365-pound nose guard Terrence Cody as lead blocker on his first offensive snap.

"I don't think there's any rocket science to it," Saban said. "The guy's a great big guy who's very powerful and took almost the whole side of the line and moved it."

The key cog in Alabama's run defense, Cody was carted off the field with a right knee injury in the third quarter. Saban said surgery didn't appear to be necessary, but Cody would likely miss a couple of weeks.

Justin Woodall and Rashad Johnson each picked off two passes in a 3-minute span during that 24-0 spurt and returned them well into Ole Miss territory - one thrown by Snead and another by McCluster on the "Wild Rebel" play where he lines up at quarterback. **ALFB**

Alabama's offense ran up a 24-3 first-half lead on the Rebels.

PLAYER FEATURE

Bobby Greenwood

A converted Crimson Tide fan, the senior defensive end has turned in a fantastic 2008.

BY CHARITY SCOTT

Alabama senior defensive lineman Bobby Greenwood was recruited out of Prattville High School, but the 6-foot-5, 278-pound player was born in Florida before leaving with his family in high school.

From there, he was quickly converted into a Crimson Tide fan from the Florida State Seminoles, and now he is one of the Tide's most consistent contributors.

Unassuming and a team player, Greenwood earns praise from Tide head coach Nick Saban for his hard-working attitude.

"He's a very consistent player; he's a hard worker who tries to do everything right," Saban said.

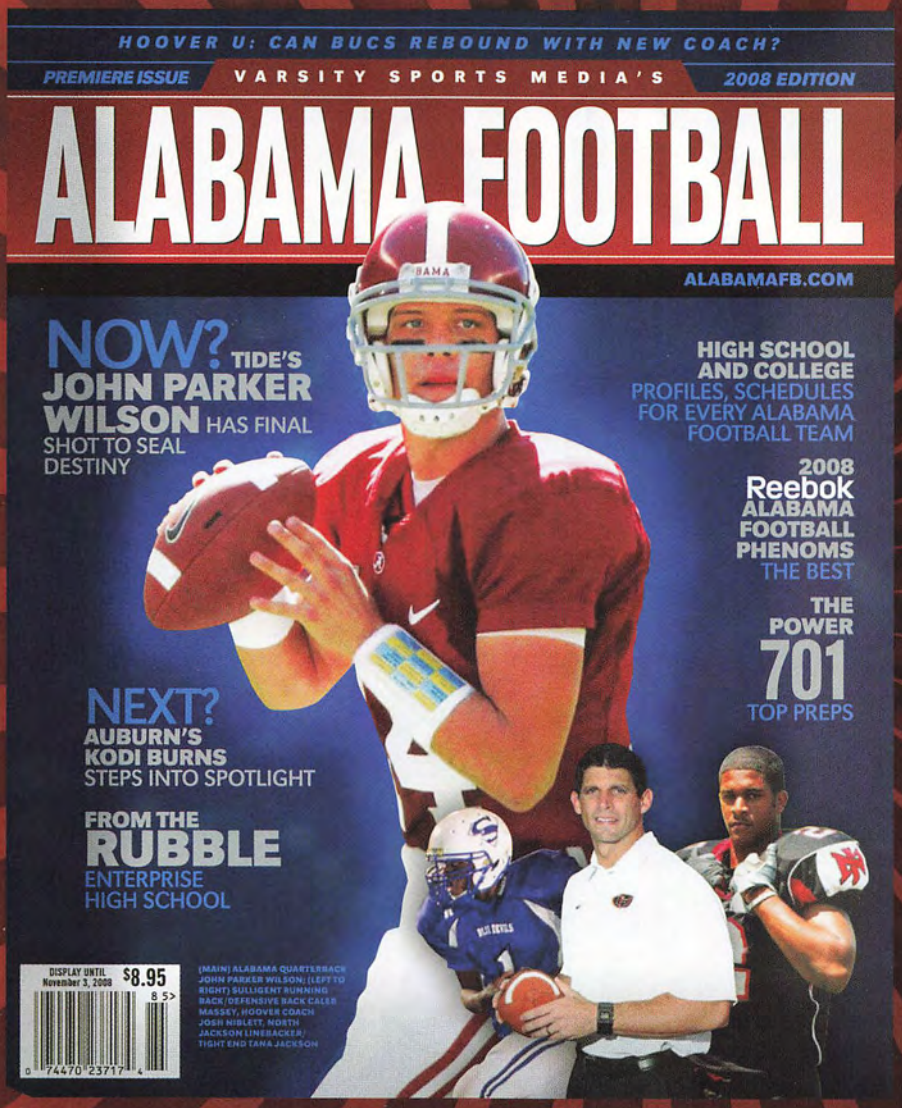
Greenwood attributes his success to the good play of the entire defensive line, and the way they support each other.

"Well, we've always been real close on the D-Line," he said. "We talked a lot this summer and knew it was a group effort ... it's just little stuff where we all work together to try and get things done."

Greenwood may be a consummate team player, but he is also a team leader in several respects. Along with being an emotional leader, he also leads in several statistical categories including sacks, with three and a half, and quarterback hurries, with seven.

Out of all things he's done, Greenwood wanted to beat Auburn. For him and the rest of the senior class that was a cloud hanging over them that was lifted after the Tide triumphed over the Tigers 36-0 during the last week of the regular season.

"I don't want to get out of here without beating Auburn," he said before the game. **ALFB**



JULY 2009

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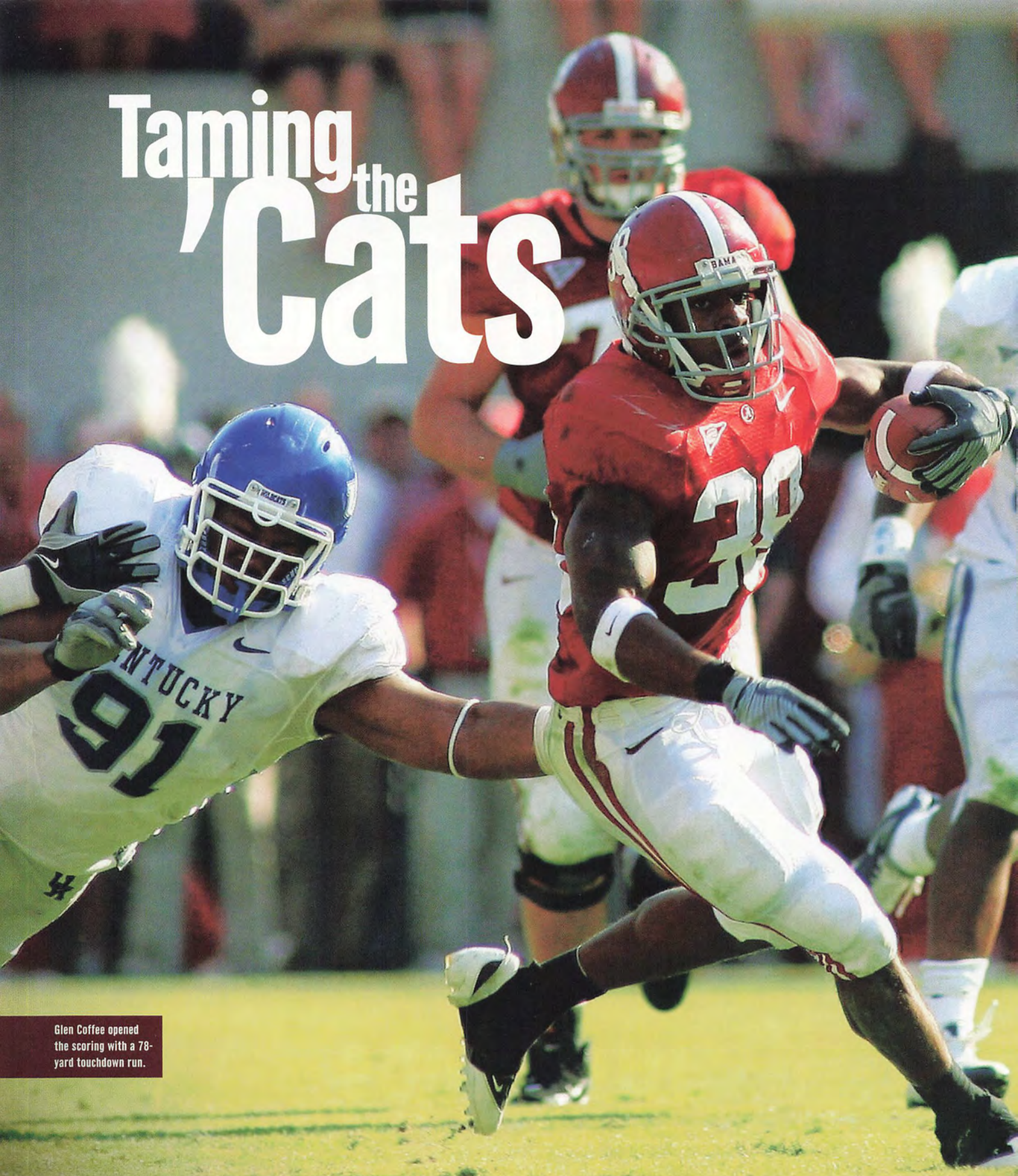
Taming the 'Cats



Glen Coffee opened the scoring with a 78-yard touchdown run.

		SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.2	14	0	0	3	17
KENTUCKY	UR	0	0	7	7	14

OCT 4
BRYANT-DENNY TUSCALOOSA

The Tide survive sloppy play and put together an impressive fourth-quarter drive to hold off Kentucky and improve to 6-0.

Rolando McClain returned this fumble for a touchdown.

Alabama discovered how precarious life at the top can be, sidestepping what could have been another top-five upset with a bruising drive and a late field goal.

Glen Coffee rushed for 218 yards, Leigh Tiffin kicked a 24-yard field goal with 2:12 left to put the Crimson Tide up 10, and No. 2 Alabama survived and advanced in the national title chase with a 17-14 win over Kentucky on Saturday.

Playing with its best national ranking in 15 years, the Tide survived three turnovers, a season-high 10 penalties, and a sputtering passing game a week after racing to a 31-0 halftime lead at Georgia.

The outcome, at least, was something coach Nick Saban could be happy with after top-five teams Georgia, Florida and Southern California were toppled last weekend.

"We're certainly happy to win but we also put on a clinic today for how to keep the other team in the game," Saban said.

Mark Ingram added 66 of the Crimson Tide's 282 total rushing yards.

Coffee and the Tide (6-0, 3-0 Southeastern Conference) pounded out a 15-play drive from their own 17-yard line to set up the clinching field goal. Coffee gained 57 yards on nine carries on the drive, which consumed 8:10.

Tiffin, who had missed two earlier kicks, drilled this one for a 17-7 lead, and the points proved necessary. John Parker Wilson had converted a fourth-and-1 with a quarterback sneak from the Kentucky 46 to keep the drive alive.

The Wildcats (4-1, 0-1) weren't done yet. Mike Hartline hit DeMoreo Ford streaking down the right sideline for a 48-yard touchdown pass with 40 seconds left. The blown pass coverage had Saban fuming on the sideline over another mistake in a day full of them for the Tide.

"They never gave up and we never put them away, and we had some chances," he said.

Kentucky's onside kick attempt went out of bounds to give Alabama the ball and the game.

The Tide's final scoring chance came after Coffee nearly lost his second fumble inside the Kentucky 10, but the ball dribbled out of bounds after the Wildcats had a clear shot to recover and Alabama kept possession.

"We had it and then we didn't," Kentucky coach Rich Brooks said. "That's kind of the way the game went for us."

Cornerback David Jones had the ball squirt from underneath him. "I tried to just fall on it and secure it, but it just slipped out," he said.

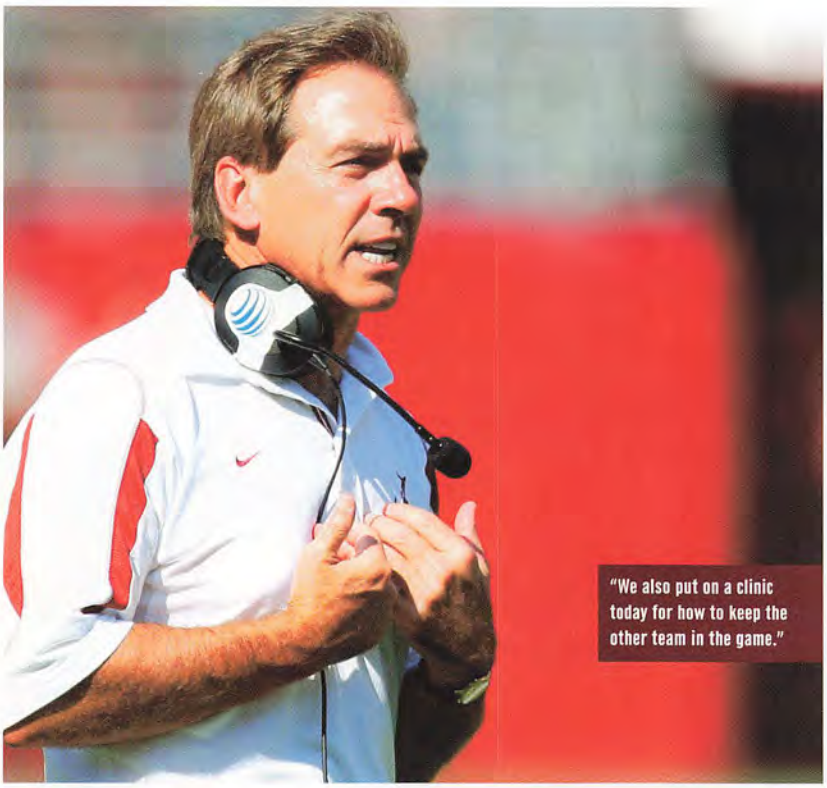
'Bama continued to dominate the series, moving to 34-2-1 overall and 20-0-1 in the state of Alabama. Kentucky was looking for its second huge upset in two seasons after beating No. 1 LSU in triple overtime last season.

Coffee had 25 carries, including a 78-yard touchdown, for the best rushing output for a 'Bama back since Shaun Alexander gained a school-record 291 yards against LSU in 1996. Kentucky came in allowing just 73 rushing yards a game and hadn't given up a TD on the ground.

The Tide ran for 282 yards.

"When I think about what I've done today, all I think about is the fumbles,"

Two fumbles kept Coffee from enjoying a career-best 218 rushing yards.



"We also put on a clinic today for how to keep the other team in the game."

BY THE NUMBERS

	UK	ALA
YARDS RUSHING	35	282
Rushing Attempts	20	49
YARDS PASSING	241	106
Completions-Attempts	20-42	7-17
TOTAL YARDS	276	388
TURNOVERS	2	3
FIRST DOWNS	12	15
PENALTIES (YARDS)	9 (58)	10 (92)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 09:48 UA - Glen Coffee 78 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
2 plays, 76 yards, TOP 1:17, UA 7 - UK 0
01:02 UA - Rolando McClain 4 yd fumble return (Leigh Tiffin kick)
0 plays, 4 yards TOP 0:00, UA 14 - UK 0
3rd 05:49 UK - Dicky Lyons Jr. 26 yd pass from Mike Hartline (Lones Seiber kick)
2 plays, 70 yards, TOP 2:11, UA 14 - UK 7
4th 02:12 UA - Leigh Tiffin 24 yd field goal
15 plays, 76 yards, TOP 8:10, UA 17 - UK 7
00:40 UK - Demoreo Ford 48 yd pass from Mike Hartline (Lones Seiber kick)
8 plays, 78 yards, TOP 1:32, UA 17 - UK 14

Coffee said. "The fumbles come to mind first. The fumbles affect the whole team."

Hartline was 20-of-42 for 241 yards and two touchdowns with an interception. Alabama's Wilson was just 7-of-17 for 106 yards and was intercepted once and sacked three times.

Outgained 253-60 in the first half, the Wildcats forced two turnovers in the third quarter and made it look easy on their first scoring drive.

Hartline dumped a pass over the middle to Derrick Locke, who scampered for a 36-yard gain. Dicky Lyons Jr. took a short slant pattern 26 yards for a touchdown on the next play to make it 14-7 with 5:49 left in the third quarter.

Hartline had just 66 yards passing before that drive, and Kentucky had gone three-and-out on five consecutive possessions.

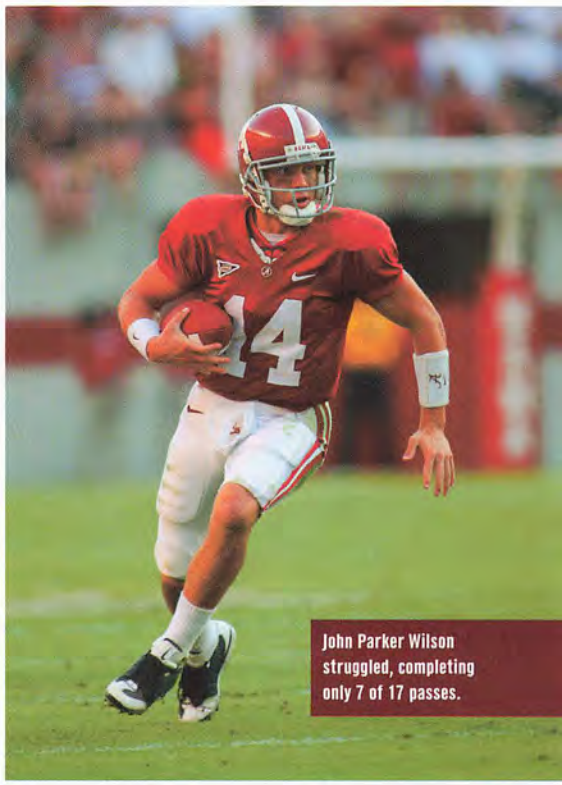
Kareem Jackson then picked off Hartline's underthrown pass after the Wildcats pushed across midfield.

The Tide had continued its string of fast starts, pushing its season first quarter advantage to 88-0 with a pair of touchdowns for the team's only points until the final minutes.

Coffee raced 78 yards up the middle, going virtually untouched and managing to just outdistance Kentucky's pursuing defenders. Then Hartline lost control of ball as he was cocking his arm for a throw and Rolando McClain scooped it up at Kentucky's 4 for a touchdown, the third scored by Alabama's defense this season.

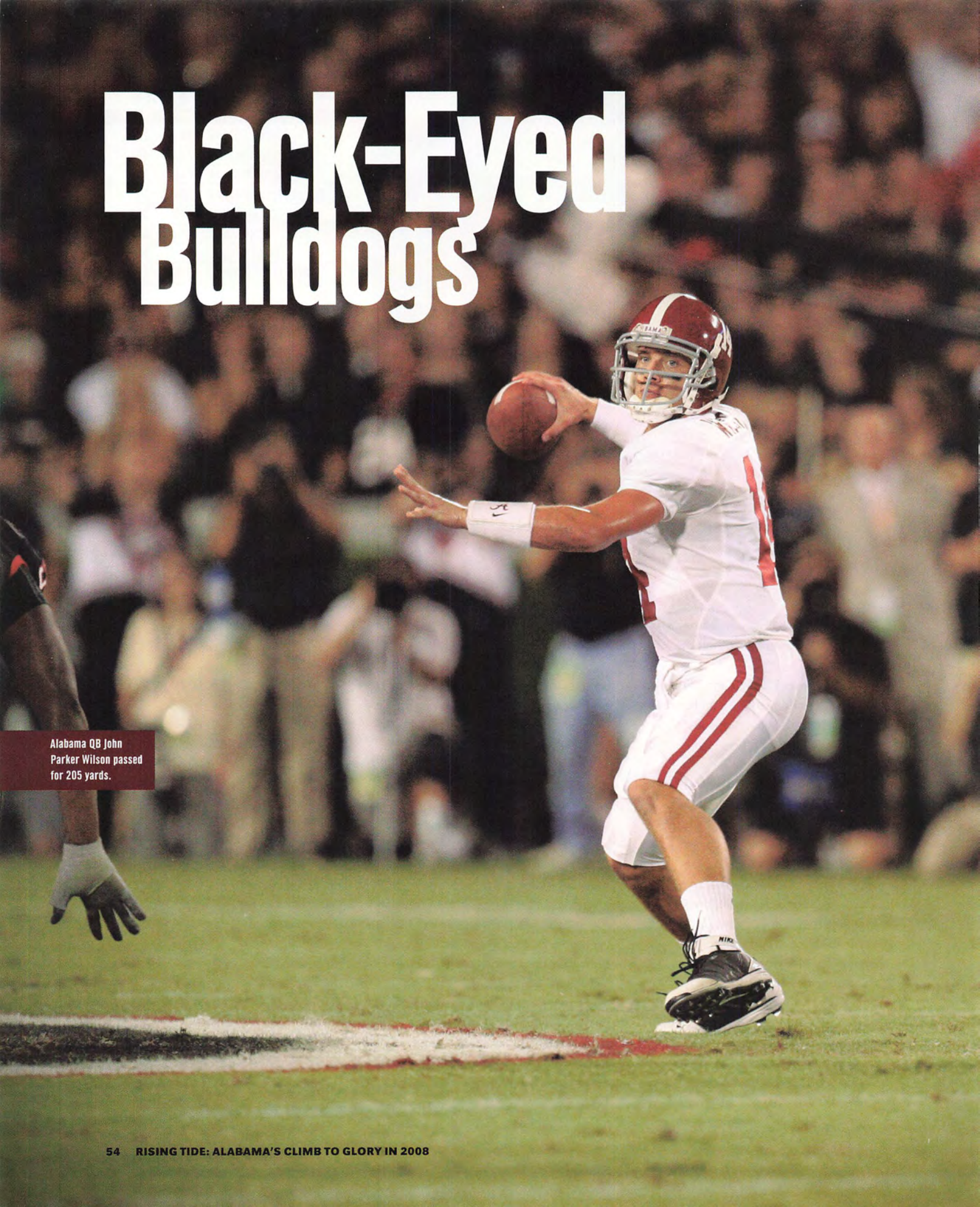
"I think we had a legitimate shot at them, but they made those plays and we didn't," Brooks said.

It could have been worse but Tiffin missed a field goal, Coffee lost a fumble at Kentucky's 6 and the Tide failed to score on two other trips across midfield in the first half. **ALFB**



John Parker Wilson struggled, completing only 7 of 17 passes.

Black-Eyed Bulldogs



Alabama QB John Parker Wilson passed for 205 yards.

		SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.8	10	21	0	10	**41**
GEORGIA	No.3	0	0	10	20	**30**

SEP 27
SANFORD ATHENS, GA.

A blacked-out stadium meant no power early for the Dawgs, and a stifling burst of first-half offense for the Crimson Tide.

Alabama's secondary breaks up a Georgia pass attempt.

Two things are certain after a scintillating Saturday night between the hedges: The black magic is gone from Georgia's motivational jerseys, and Alabama has vaulted into the national spotlight as a championship contender.

In a night game in Athens darkened by a Georgia "blackout", the No. 8 Crimson Tide shocked the No. 3 Bulldogs early and rode out a big first-half lead to a comfortable 41-30 victory at Sanford Stadium.

Alabama hung 31 points on the men in black before intermission, scoring four touchdowns and a field goal on its only five possessions of the first 30 minutes.

As well as Alabama played in the first two quarters, Matt Stafford and Georgia's offense played equally bad. The Bulldog's five first-half drives ended with three punts and two turnovers.

Alabama first-half domination was undeniable. The Tide racked up 17

Alabama's Roy Upchurch rumbles for some of his 18 rushing yards.

first downs compared to Georgia's four and dominated the time of possession, holding the ball for 11:19 of the first quarter.

When asked if his team didn't do anything well in the first half, head coach Nick Saban had a surprising answer considering his usual postgame demeanor.

"No," he said.

"We probably played the best half a football we have played all season. It couldn't have come at a better time ... I was really pleased with the way we played."

The second half didn't quite follow suit, but the first-half buffer proved sufficient.

The offense left the locker room and hit the field flat, punting away all three of its third quarter drives on consecutive three-and-outs, opening the window for a Bulldog comeback. Georgia capitalized with 17 unanswered points to shrink the lead to 31-17. A rejuvenated Tide offense then pumped out 10 points in the fourth quarter to push the lead to 41-17 and thwart any hopes of a Bulldog comeback.

Saban said the keys to the victory revolved around both team's running games. Alabama has leaned on its ground game through its first four victories, and Saban said it was critical to establish it early against Georgia's gritty front line.

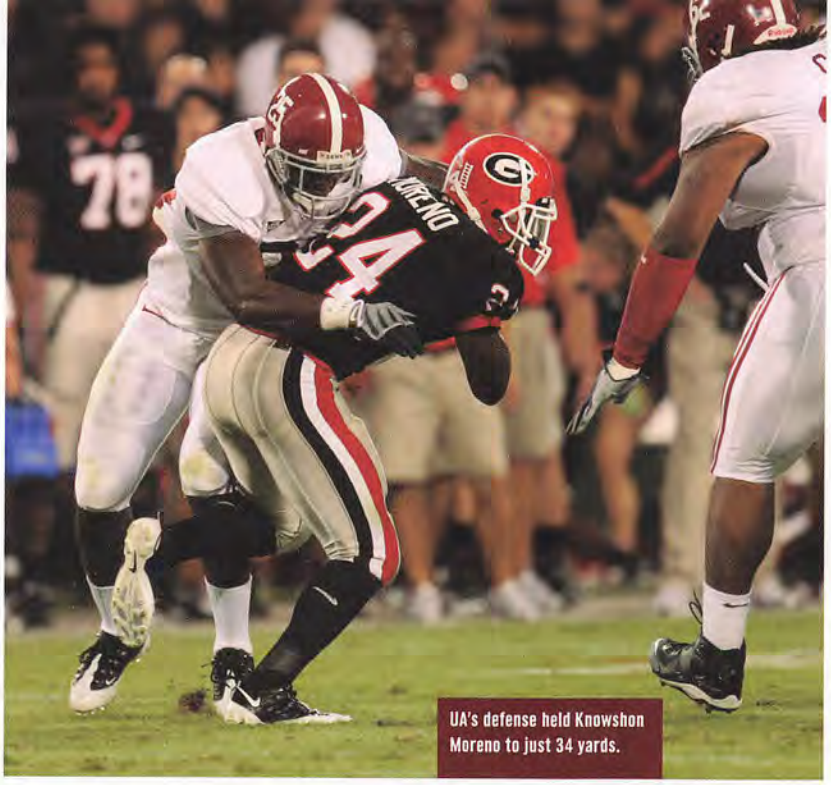
Tailbacks Mark Ingram, Glen Coffee and Roy Upchurch each reached the end zone despite combining for just 91 yards on the ground.

On the other side, being able to slow Knowshon Moreno with just seven players in the box gave Alabama the extra defensive back it needed to keep Stafford and his talented receivers in check.

Stafford finished 24-of-42 for 274 yards, two touchdowns and an interception. Both touchdown throws occurred in the final three minutes of the game, when it was no longer in question.

"I think we made a good statement

Alabama receiver Julio Jones caught five passes for 94 yards and a touchdown.



UA's defense held Knowshon Moreno to just 34 yards.

BY THE NUMBERS

	ALA	UGA
YARDS RUSHING	129	50
Rushing Attempts	45	16
YARDS PASSING	205	274
Completions-Attempts	13-16	24-43
TOTAL YARDS	334	324
TURNOVERS	1	2
FIRST DOWNS	21	18
PENALTIES (YARDS)	2 (9)	10 (81)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 08:32 UA - Mark Ingram 7 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
1 plays, 80 yards, TOP 6:28, UA 7 - GA 0
00:49 UA - Leigh Tiffin 23 yd field goal
8 plays, 60 yards, TOP 4:51, UA 10 - GA 0
2nd 11:58 UA - Glen Coffee 3 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
5 plays, 48 yards, TOP 2:38, UA 17 - GA 0
06:47 UA - Roy Upchurch 4 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
7 plays, 33 yards, TOP 3:15, UA 24 - GA 0
01:25 UA - Julio Jones 22 yd pass from John Parker Wilson (Leigh Tiffin kick)
6 plays, 63 yards, TOP 3:10, UA 31 - GA 0
3rd 11:07 GA - Blair Walsh 43 yd field goal
7 plays, 47 yards, TOP 3:53, UA 31 - GA 3
01:16 GA - Knowshon Moreno 2 yd run (Blair Walsh kick)
10 plays, 58 yards, TOP 4:41, UA 31 - GA 10
4th 14:41 GA - Prince Miller 92 yd punt return (Blair Walsh kick)
UA 31 - GA 17
09:45 UA - Leigh Tiffin 32 yd field goal
8 plays, 51 yards, TOP 4:48, UA 34 - GA 17
04:13 UA - Glen Coffee 12 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
5 plays, 47 yards, TOP 3:02, UA 41 - GA 17
03:00 GA - Michael Moore 24 yd pass from M. Stafford (M. Stafford pass failed)
5 plays, 40 yards, TOP 1:04, UA 41 - GA 23
01:35 GA - A.J. Green 21 yd pass from M. Stafford (Blair Walsh kick)
6 plays, 58 yards, TOP 1:21, UA 41 - GA 30

tonight," senior safety Rashad Johnson said. "We have a good team, and as long as we're playing our game, we're going to be hard to beat ... I think we are a great team ... but only if we're playing our game."

Analysts pinned the Tide's hopes on the arm and mind of quarterback John Parker Wilson, who has led an inconsistent passing game that has shown flashes of greatness through four games. He responded with maybe his best game of the year to date.

Wilson began the game 7-of-7, with his first incompletion coming midway through the second quarter. Only two more of his passes would fall to the turf the rest of the game. He finished 13-of-16 for 205 yards and one touchdown.

"J.P.'s a totally different player now," said Antoine Caldwell. "The guy's confident. He's calm. He's our leader, and that's what he displayed tonight. The guy understands the offense."

Wilson's 205-yard aerial performance earned him yet another top spot in the Alabama record books. With a 29-yard strike to Roy Upchurch, the senior eclipsed Brodie Croyle's old mark of 6,382 yards. Wilson now has 6,398 yards less than halfway through his final season.

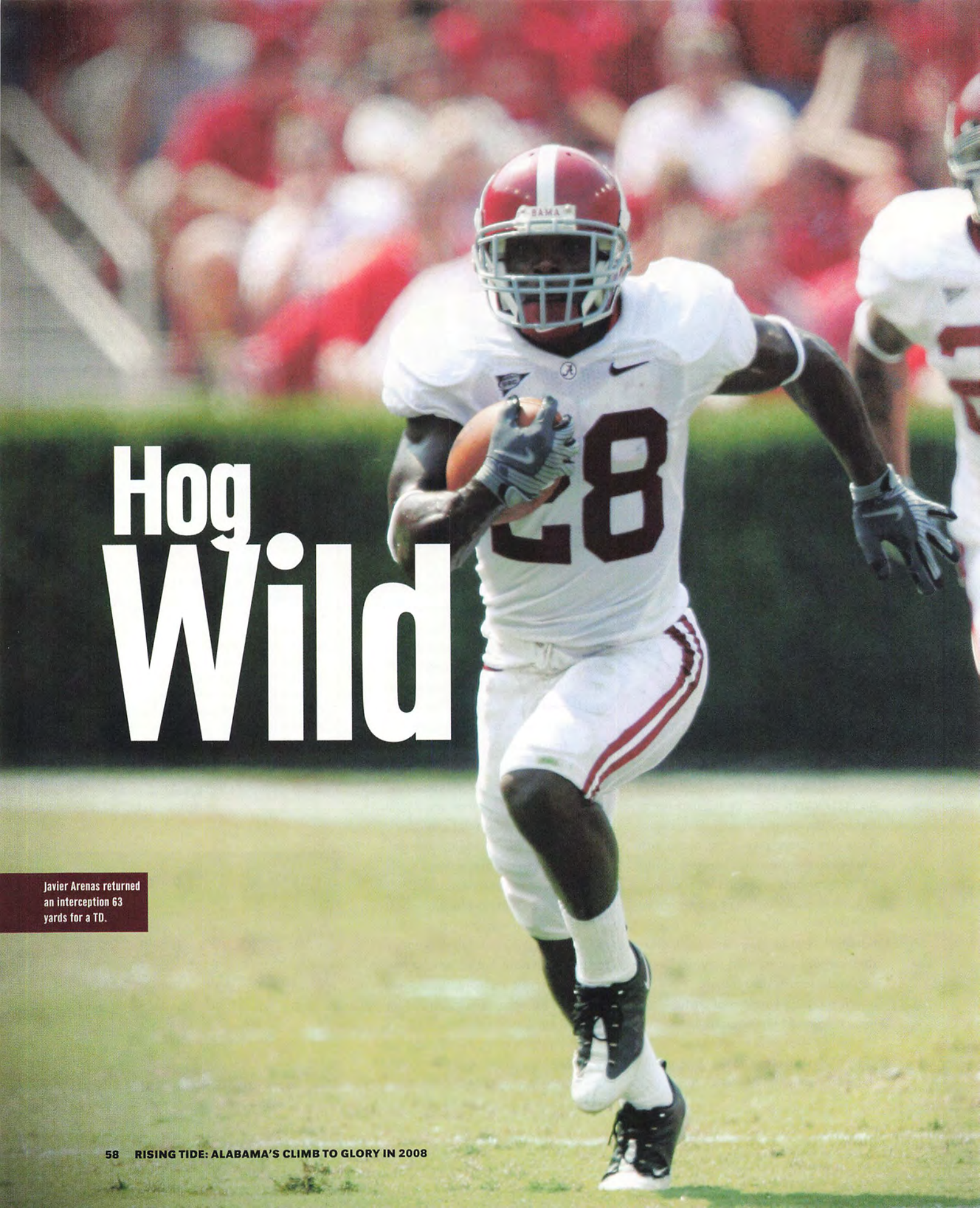
Saban said the game appeared to be Julio Jones' breakout performance. The freshmen outplayed Georgia's marquee freshman receiver A.J. Green, hauling in 4 receptions for 79 yards, including an over-the-shoulder touchdown grab to extend the Tide's lead to 31 points before the half. Green finished with just 34 yards on three receptions.

Alabama's win could signal yet another shakeup in the national polls. Three of the top four teams fell this week—No. 1 USC, Georgia, and No. 4 Florida. With Oklahoma expected to claim the top spot, Alabama could leapfrog to as high as No. 2.

Saban remains uninterested in the rankings, urging his football team not to "drink the Kool-Aid," a phrase he uses to describe the contentment players ease into when they buy into the national hype.

"It's a great win for us. It's a big win here," Saban said. "(But) it doesn't matter where you are until the end." **ALFB**

Alabama's Leigh Tiffin made field goals of 23 and 32 yards.



Hog Wild

Javier Arenas returned an interception 63 yards for a TD.

		SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.9	21	14	7	7	49
ARKANSAS	UR	0	7	0	7	14

SEP 20

RAZORBACK FAYETTEVILLE, ARK.

Glen Coffee, Javier Arenas and the Crimson Tide defense enjoy an all-day barbecue at Reynolds Razorback Stadium.

Alabama's Glen Coffee scored two TDs against the Hogs.

Twice on Saturday, Casey Dick was on his back looking up at an Alabama defender returning one of his passes for six points.

Alabama's defense took the air out of Arkansas' new high-flying offense as the ninth-ranked Crimson Tide exposed the Razorbacks with a 49-14 victory at Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium.

With all but one of Alabama's seven touchdowns coming on plays of 25 yards or longer, the Tide used big plays to dominate the Hogs in its first SEC game for both teams of the season.

And some of them came from unexpected places, as the Tide's power backs hit a gear Alabama fans haven't seen.

Not Terry Grant or Mark Ingram, the stalwarts through the first three weeks, but Glen Coffee and Roy Upchurch broke runs of 87 yards and 62 yards respectively to reach the end zone.

"We were ready to play, but I feel like when I broke that run, the team

Alabama's Terrence Cody and Andre Smith celebrate a Tide touchdown.

took it to a whole new level," Coffee said. "I feel like we answered the call. You visualize plays like that every game and when it comes true, you have to give thanks to the Lord. I also give thanks to the (offensive) line for their hard work."

Center Antoine Caldwell was as excited as Coffee about the long run.

"That's probably the best feeling I've had the last two or three years," he said. "Not a lot of times we've actually broken long gains and actually scored on them."

Defensive backs Javier Arenas and Justin Woodall each recorded a pick-six to boost Alabama's lead to 35-7 by the half.

Trailing 14-0 in the first quarter, Arkansas marched into Tide territory with three first downs, but an-off target throw from Casey Dick ended up in the hands of a waiting Javier Arenas. With 63 yards and a quarterback separating him from six points, the return man had no problem finding the end zone -- as a simple juke from Arenas left an overmatched Dick on his back and Arenas in the end zone.

The return signaled déjà vu as the Tide took a 21-0 first-quarter lead, just like last year's contest in Tuscaloosa. Unlike last year, the Razorbacks were too demoralized and understaffed to make a comeback run.

"When you're in a fight, and you take a bat and hit someone in the knee with it, they're going to feel it," Arenas said. "When we were going out there, coach was stressing: 'hit 'em in mouth. First play, let them know we're about business; jack 'em up.' That was the same time of situation, it just wasn't physical."

Woodall was gassed after his 74-yard return, the last touchdown of the half that gave Alabama a 28-point advantage. Like Arenas, he shook off Dick, again just a minor hiccup, to take it to the house.

The strong safety said he was more than a little winded after the play. He had to remove his pads in the locker room at halftime.

"It was his (Casey's) third read. He came back to it and I was sitting on it," Woodall said. "I guess he didn't see me ... I was tired. I was real dizzy. They wanted to give me an IV, but I said no. 'No needles'," he said with a laugh.

The home run plays provided a cushion for the Tide defense, which, though the scoreboard won't show it, struggled at times to keep the Hogs off the field. Arkansas converted nearly a third of its third-down situations and outgained Alabama's offense in the first half.

"Defensively, we made a lot of mental errors today, especially in coverage-type of things and on third (down)," head coach Nick Saban said. "That is probably why they kept the ball so much, especially in the first half, and we got tired on defense. Even though we made some big plays and ran them back for touchdowns, and that was great and I am happy with it, and those are important plays in the game, but our down-in and down-out execution was not as good

Alabama's Eryk Anders (32) and Rolando McClain gang up on the Razorbacks.

BY THE NUMBERS

	ALA	ARK
YARDS RUSHING	328	92
Rushing Attempts	35	31
YARDS PASSING	74	217
Completions-Attempts	6-15	24-46
TOTAL YARDS	402	309
TURNOVERS	1	4
FIRST DOWNS	15	19
PENALTIES (YARDS)	1 (10)	5 (30)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 10:40 UA - Mark Ingram 1 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
10 plays, 71 yards, TOP 4:20, UA 7 - AR 0
06:52 UA - Glen Coffee 87 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
1 play, 87 yards, TOP 0:13, UA 14 - AR 0
00:53 UA - Javier Arenas 63 yd interception return (Leigh Tiffin kick)
UA 21 - AR 0
2nd 10:30 AR - Andrew Davie 12 yd pass from Casey Dick (Alex Tejada kick)
9 plays, 47 yards, TOP 5:23, UA 21 - AR 7
08:31 UA - Julio Jones 25 yd pass from John Parker Wilson (Leigh Tiffin kick)
5 plays, 68 yards, TOP 1:59, UA 28 - AR 7
06:15 UA - Justin Woodall 74 yd interception return (Leigh Tiffin kick)
UA 35 - AR 7
3rd 14:05 UA - Glen Coffee 31 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
2 plays, 34 yards, TOP 0:41, UA 42 - AR 7
4th 10:59 AR - Michael Smith 10 yd pass from Tyler Wilson (Alex Tejada kick)
6 plays, 34 yards, TOP 1:48, UA 42 - AR 14
10:36 UA - Roy Upchurch 62 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
1 play, 62 yards, TOP 0:23, UA 49 -

today as it has been in most games."

Alabama's defensive unit did turn in a gritty goal-line stand just before halftime to send a dejected Arkansas team to the locker room.

Marquis Johnson and Chris Rogers came up with an interception each to boost Alabama's total to four for the game, half of which were returned for touchdowns.

Alabama took advantage of a senseless Arkansas penalty to get on the board on its first possession.

Arkansas forced the Tide into a fourth down but was flagged on a running into the punter call, giving Alabama a fresh set of downs. Four plays later, John Parker Wilson connected with Earl Alexander on a 26-yard post route to set up first and goal. Mark Ingram punched it with consecutive carries to give the Tide a lead it would soon bolster but never relinquish.

Arkansas was forced to punt on its first drive, pinning Alabama deep in its own territory. On the first play of the series, Coffee carried it up the gut, cut back and sprinted 87 yards down the Arkansas sideline to paydirt, just barely outpacing the nearest defender who dove at his feet at the goal line.

After back-to-back punts, Alabama extended its lead with Arenas' interception return.

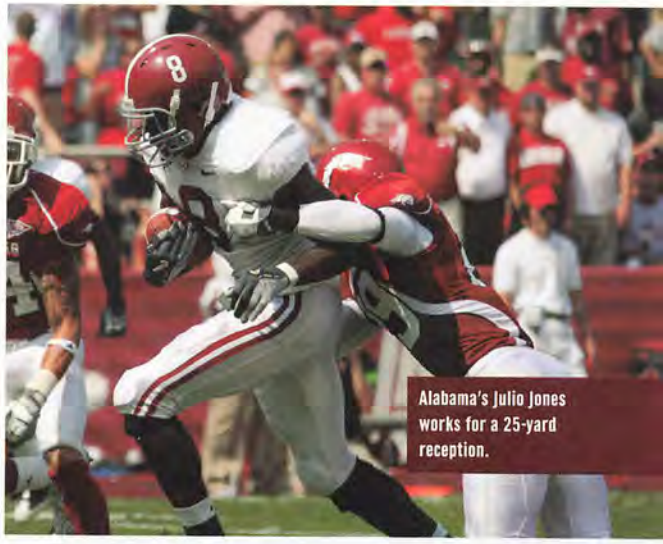
Arkansas' Dennis Johnson returned the kickoff 41-yards, and the Razorbacks ended thoughts of a shutout with an eight-play, 41-yard touchdown drive. Andrew Davie ran a delayed corner route and found himself uncovered in the end zone for an easy pass and catch, cutting the Alabama lead to 21-7.

The Tide countered with a record-setting drive. Alabama capped nine-play drive with a 25-yard strike from Wilson to Julio Jones, who brushed off two defenders for the score. Wilson broke Brodie Croyle's Alabama career passing touchdown mark on the play, pushing his total to 42.

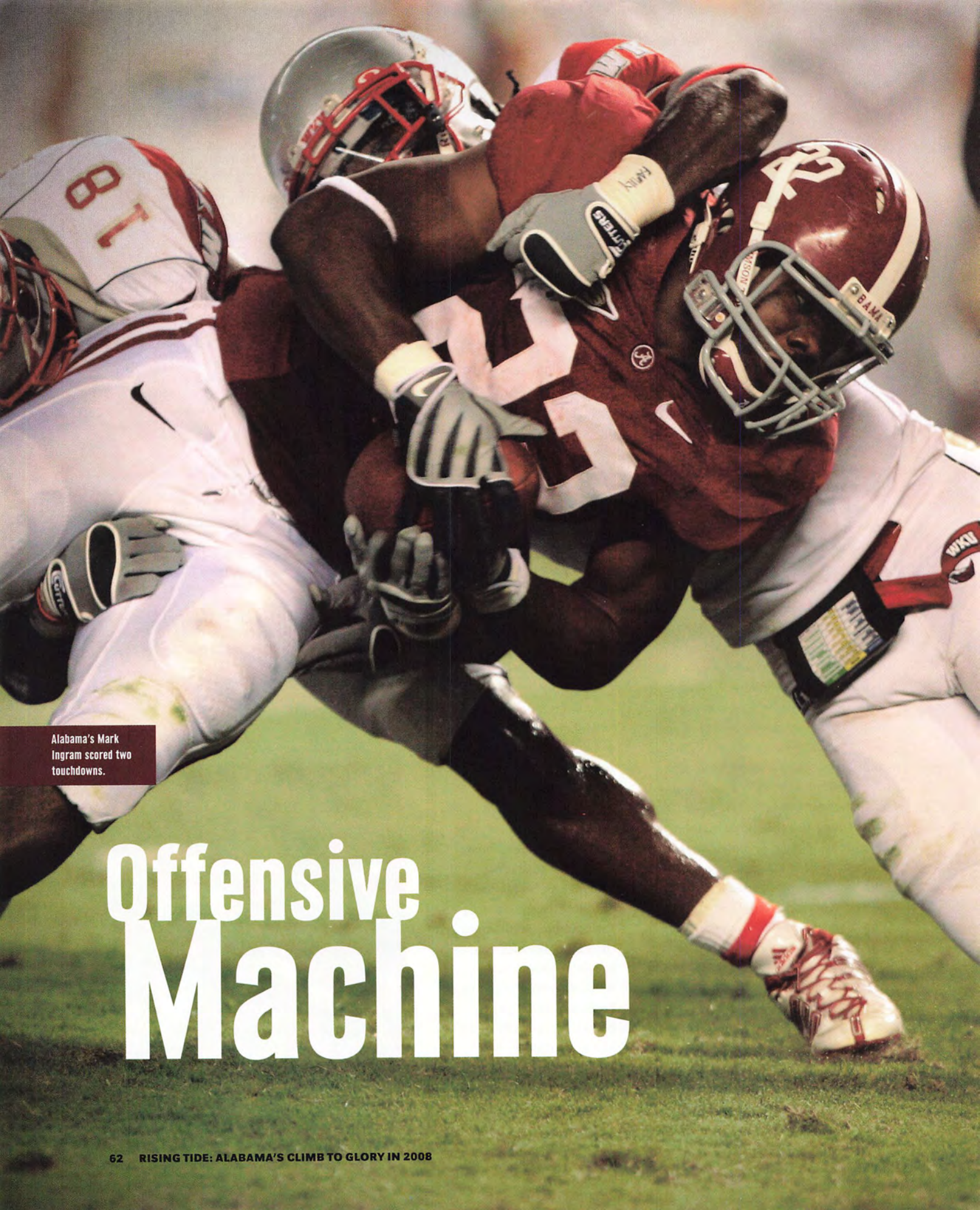
Woodall's interception return and a 31-yard touchdown scamper by Coffee gave Alabama its second run of 21 unanswered points.

Alabama led 35-7 at the half, despite being outgained 234 yards to 226 in total offense.

Most of the second half consisted of back-up players and punts, interrupted by another touchdown scamper by Coffee and an acrobatic interception by Chris Rogers. Both teams tacked on meaningless touchdowns late in the third, including Upchurch's. Backup quarterbacks played the majority of the fourth quarter for both teams as Alabama rode out its 49-14 rout. **ALFB**



Alabama's Julio Jones works for a 25-yard reception.

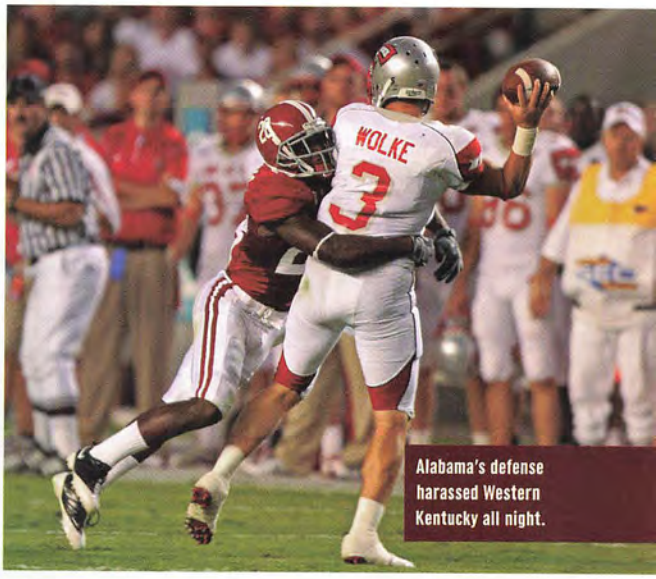


Alabama's Mark Ingram scored two touchdowns.

Offensive Machine

			SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.11	SEP 13	17	14	10	0	41
W. KENTUCKY	UR	BRYANT-DENNY TUSCALOOSA	0	7	0	0	7

Coming off a lackluster victory against Tulane, the Crimson Tide offense shows plenty of might against the visiting Hilltoppers.



Alabama's defense harassed Western Kentucky all night.

After a dominating win over the then-No.9 team in the nation, Clemson, and a difficult win over a Tulane team many expected the Tide to dispatch of with much efficiency, the Alabama football team that faced Western Kentucky on Saturday evening was one surrounded by questions.

Head coach Nick Saban said consistency was one of the most important aspects of a successful football team, and thus far Alabama has been anything but. As his young team looked to establish its identity for the season, many Tide fans wondered which Alabama team would show up at Bryant-Denny Stadium to face the Hilltoppers.

That question was answered quickly and resoundingly as the Tide went on to do exactly what was expected from them, and soundly thump the Hilltoppers 41-7.

"The goal in this game was to go prove that you could play to your capacity," Saban said. "That you could play your best football and show the competitive character that you had

Even a crowd-surfing Big Al enjoyed the Western Kentucky atmosphere.

back Rashad Johnson and junior defensive back Javier Arenas, who contributed seven tackles apiece. Arenas also had a sack.

Alabama held Western Kentucky to 158 total yards compared to the 557 yards generated by the Tide offense.

Saban said it was important for the offense to establish the tempo of the game from the outset, and then reestablish that tempo coming out of half-time. The team did this in various ways including switching to a no-huddle offense at several points to force the Western Kentucky defense to hurry.

"That's what we always sort of strive for, to be able to control the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball... I thought we did a really good job of controlling the line of scrimmage, and that you would do it by going out and executing."

Alabama got off to a quick start, forcing Western Kentucky to punt on the first possession of the game. The Hilltoppers would go three and out on every possession until the beginning of the second quarter when they finally got a first down, although that drive also ended in a punt.

The Tide quickly made its way into the red zone during its first possession, and Mark Ingram scored off a seven yard rush with a little over four minutes gone in the first quarter.

Two minutes later, Alabama scored again, this time after a fumble that was initiated and recovered by junior lineman Terrence Cody. Kicker Leigh Tiffin kicked a 22 yard field goal to put the Tide up 10-0.

This began a streak of possessions that ended in an Alabama score that lasted until senior quarterback John Parker Wilson threw an interception with 6:56 left in the second quarter. The pass, which was intercepted by senior free safety Travis Watters, led to Western Kentucky's first and only scoring drive of the game. A 30 yard pass from senior quarterback David Wolke to freshman tight end Tristan Jones made the score 24-7, after the extra point.

Despite that touchdown, the defense put together another dominating performance lead by senior defensive

Tide QB John Parker Wilson passed for a season-high 215 yards against WKY.

Alabama RB Roy Upchurch rushed for 53 yards on 11 carries against WKY.

BY THE NUMBERS

	WKY	ALA
YARDS RUSHING	42	281
Rushing Attempts	22	49
YARDS PASSING	116	276
Completions-Attempts	14-26	21-33
TOTAL YARDS	158	557
TURNOVERS	2	2
FIRST DOWNS	9	30
PENALTIES (YARDS)	5 (27)	3 (25)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 08:42 UA - Mark Ingram 7 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
11 plays, 63 yards, TOP 4:21, WKU 0 - UA 7
06:30 UA - Leigh Tiffin 22 yd field goal
6 plays, 11 yards, TOP 2:01, WKU 0 - UA 10
00:49 UA - Mark Ingram 5 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
5 plays, 56 yards, TOP 2:19, WKU 0 - UA 17
2nd 09:51 UA - Terry Grant 8 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
8 plays, 78 yards, TOP 3:46, WKU 0 - UA 24
04:21 WKU - Tristan Jones 30 yd pass from David Wolke (Tanner Siewert kick)
4 plays, 36 yards, TOP 2:24, WKU 7 - UA 24
01:57 UA - Nick Walker 2 yd pass from John Parker Wilson (Leigh Tiffin kick)
6 plays, 70 yards, TOP 2:24, WKU 7 - UA 31
3rd 09:57 UA - Leigh Tiffin 25 yd field goal
11 plays, 54 yards, TOP 5:03, WKU 7 - UA 34
04:57 UA - Julio Jones 12 yd pass from John Parker Wilson (Leigh Tiffin kick)
7 plays, 56 yards, TOP 2:32, WKU 7 - UA 41

running it effectively and made some plays in the passing game," he said.

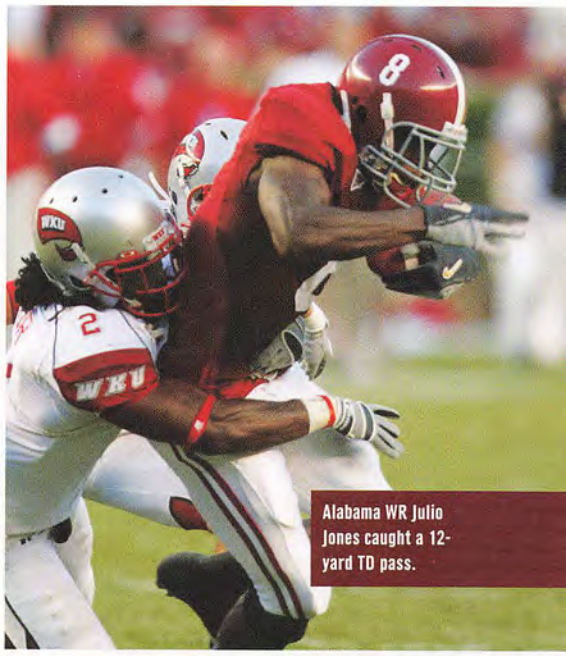
Saban said he was pleased that the team got the chance to play a lot of its younger players later on in the game. Sophomore quarterback Greg McElroy was charged with managing much the fourth quarter, and threw 4-6, 61 yards and no interceptions.

While some young players were getting their first taste of in game experience, others were turning in the most impressive performances at their position for the game. Freshman wideout Julio Jones led all receivers with 66 yards and a touchdown, while freshman running back Mark Ingram banged in two touchdowns for the Tide.

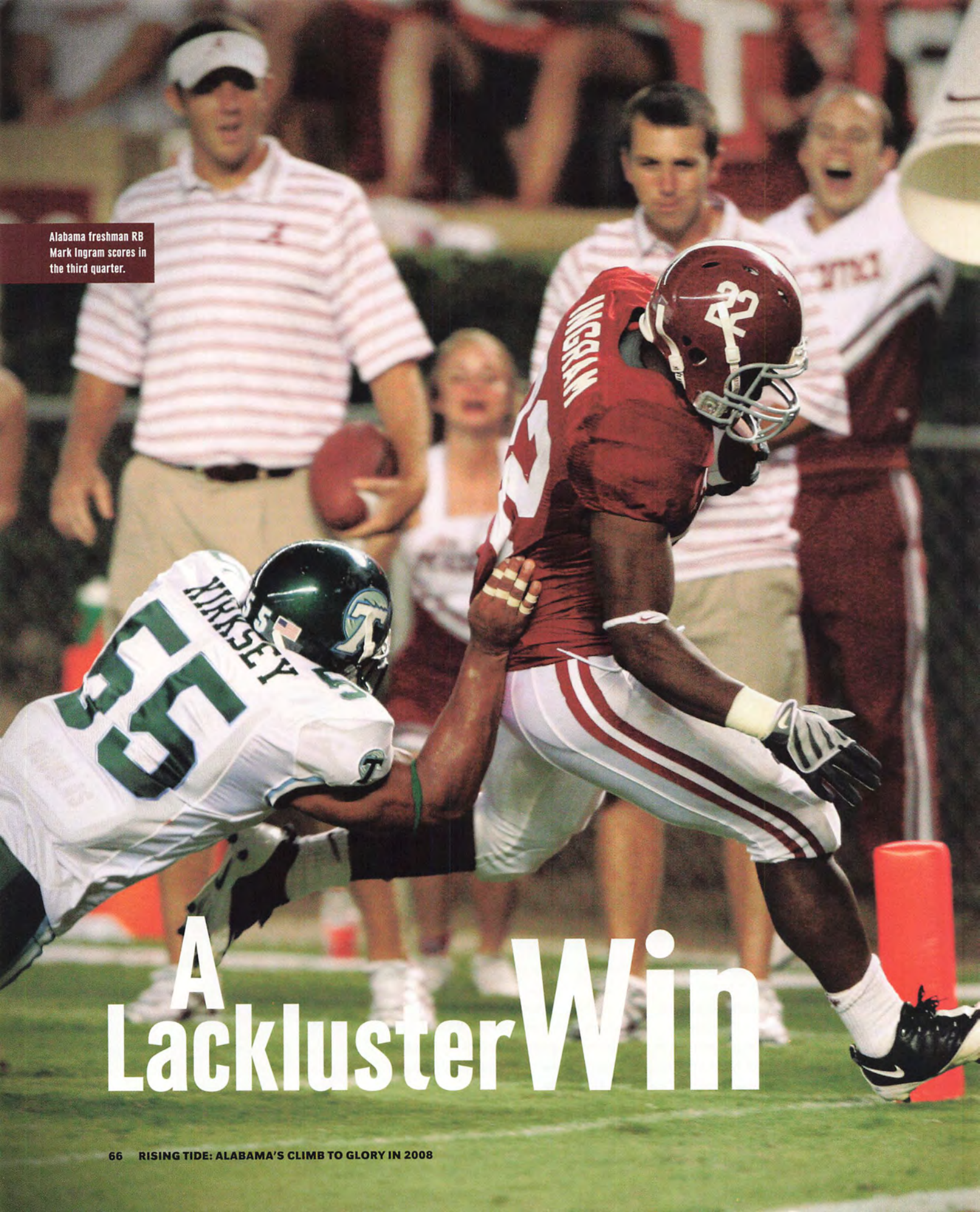
"[Jones has] really been a pleasant surprise to see the maturity that he has played with pretty much the entire season," Saban said.

Saban said he was disappointed in the way his team performed in the Tulane game coming off the dominant win in Atlanta, but that he's is glad that they seem to be turning things back around.

"Everything we've done to this point is to get ready to play in the SEC," he said. "So if we don't learn our lessons and we don't improve from each game, then it'll show up when we start playing the competition that we're going to play in the future." **ALFB**



Alabama WR Julio Jones caught a 12-yard TD pass.

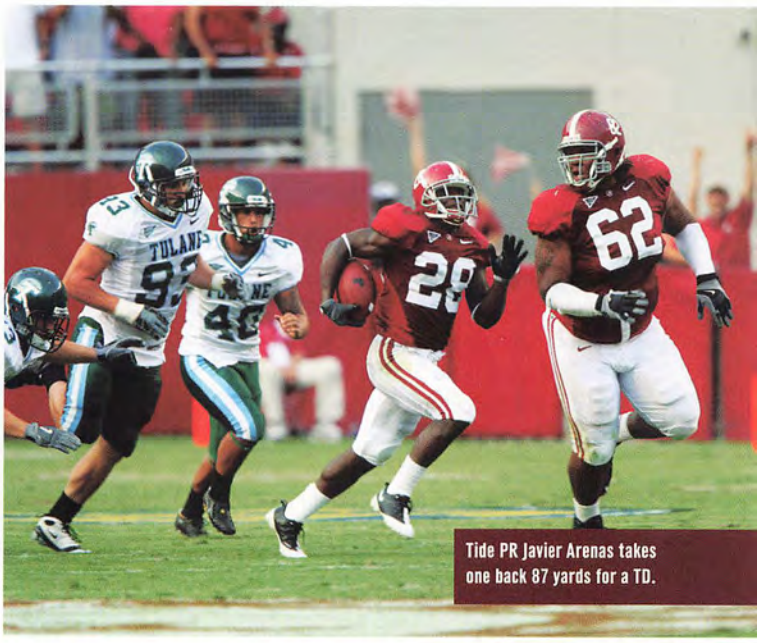


Alabama freshman RB Mark Ingram scores in the third quarter.

A Lackluster Win

			SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.13	SEP 6	13	0	7	0	20
TULANE	UR	BRYANT-DENNY TUSCALOOSA	0	3	0	3	6

Tulane was forced from its home by Hurricane Gustav, and the Crimson Tide is a hospitable host despite handily winning.



Tide PR Javier Arenas takes one back 87 yards for a TD.

Forced out of New Orleans a week ago by the threat of Hurricane Gustav, Tulane got a standing ovation from Alabama fans just for jogging into the stadium.

The 13th-ranked Crimson Tide wasn't as nice, even as it struggled to a win.

Javier Arenas returned a punt 87 yards for a touchdown and Alabama held on Saturday to beat Tulane 20-6.

Just one game after looking like world beaters against then-No. 9 Clemson, a listless Alabama (2-0) allowed four sacks of John Parker Wilson, fumbled once, missed two kicks and gained only 172 yards - just 38 in the first half.

Coach Nick Saban got his 100th collegiate career victory, but he wasn't exactly thrilled.

Alabama freshman WR Marquis Maze makes one of his four receptions.

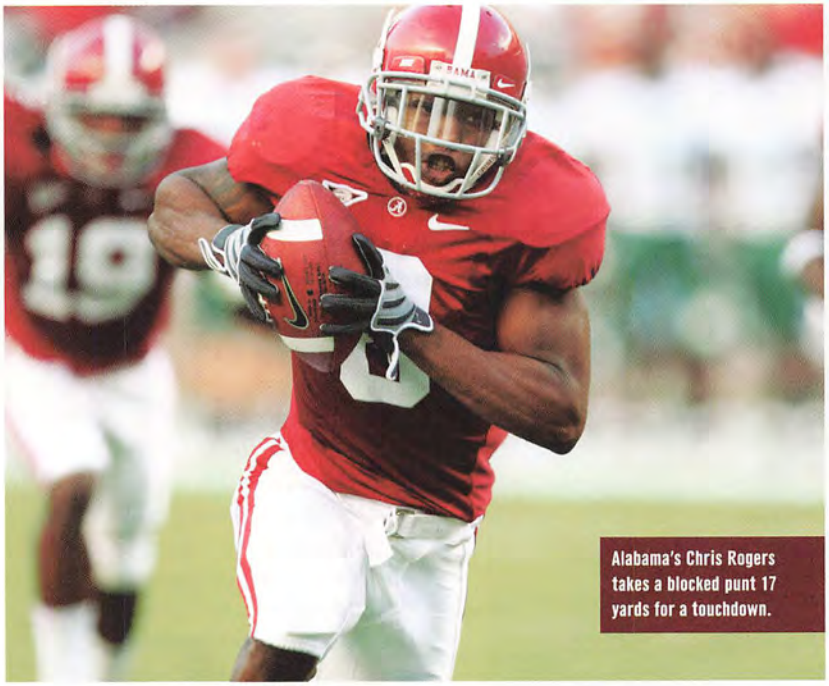
"It's a little disappointing. It's our goal to play with consistency ... but we were unable to do that," he said. "We did not make progress as a team."

Playing in its season opener after days of hotel food and worrying about friends and family back in Louisiana, Tulane kept the Tide offense off balance but managed only field goals of 35 and 21 yards by Ross Thevenot, who missed two more.

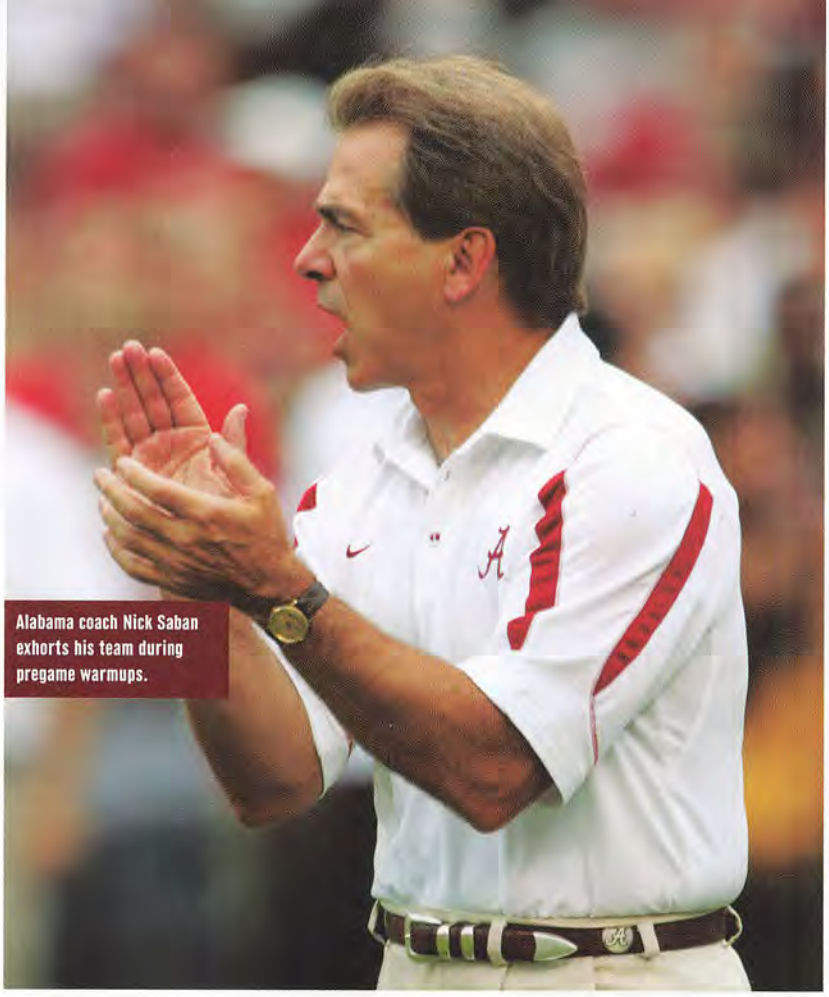
Tulane headed back home, but it might not be for long since another hurricane, Ike, could threaten the northern Gulf coast next week. Coach Bob Toledo doesn't know what to expect in the coming days.

"I'm not a weather guy, but I guess it's coming our way," he said.

Arenas gave 'Bama all the points it needed early.



Alabama's Chris Rogers takes a blocked punt 17 yards for a touchdown.



Alabama coach Nick Saban exhorts his team during pregame warmups.

BY THE NUMBERS

	TUL	ALA
YARDS RUSHING	86	99
Rushing Attempts	32	26
YARDS PASSING	232	73
Completions-Attempts	29-50	11-23
TOTAL YARDS	318	172
TURNOVERS	0	1
FIRST DOWNS	18	11
PENALTIES (YARDS)	4 (29)	6 (43)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 10:43 UA - Javier Arenas 87 yd punt return (Leigh Tiffin kick)
UA 7, TU 0
3:15 UA - Chris Rogers 17 yd blocked punt return (Corey Smith kickfailed)
UA 13 - TU 0
2nd 13:07 TU - Ross Thevenot 35 yd field goal
12 plays, 42 yards, TOP 5:08, UA 13 - TU 3
3rd 0:00 UA - Mark Ingram 15 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
11 plays, 77 yards, TOP 4:41, UA 20 - TU 3
4th 11:47 TU - Ross Thevenot 21 yd field goal
11 plays, 70 yards, TOP 3:13, UA 20 - TU 6

Tulane's first drive stalled on the Alabama 46, and Darren deRochemont punted. Arenas caught the ball at his own 13, broke a tackle and cut down the left sideline for a TD that had fans screaming wildly.

DeRochemont was forced to punt two drives later from the Green Wave 23, but Roy Upchurch made a diving block. Chris Rogers scooped up the ball and ran 17 yards for a score.

The special teams theatrics over, Alabama's offense sputtered badly. Scattered boos got louder after the offensive line allowed three sacks in the second quarter alone, and freshman Corey Smith, in briefly for the injured Leigh Tiffin, missed a point-after kick and a 37-yard field goal.

Alabama didn't manage an offensive touchdown until the end of the third quarter, when Mark Ingram scored on a 15-yard run to cap a 77-yard, 11-play drive that wore down the Tulane defense.

With Alabama missing injured offensive line starters Andre Smith and Marlon Davis, Wilson was under pressure all night. He completed just 11 of 23 passes for 73 yards but didn't thrown an interception.

Arenas, who set an Alabama record with 212 return yards, left injured in the third quarter after getting leveled by Jordan Ellis on a punt return. Saban said Arenas suffered a blow to the head but should be OK.

Tulane's Thevenot was wide left on field goal attempts from 41 and 23 yards.

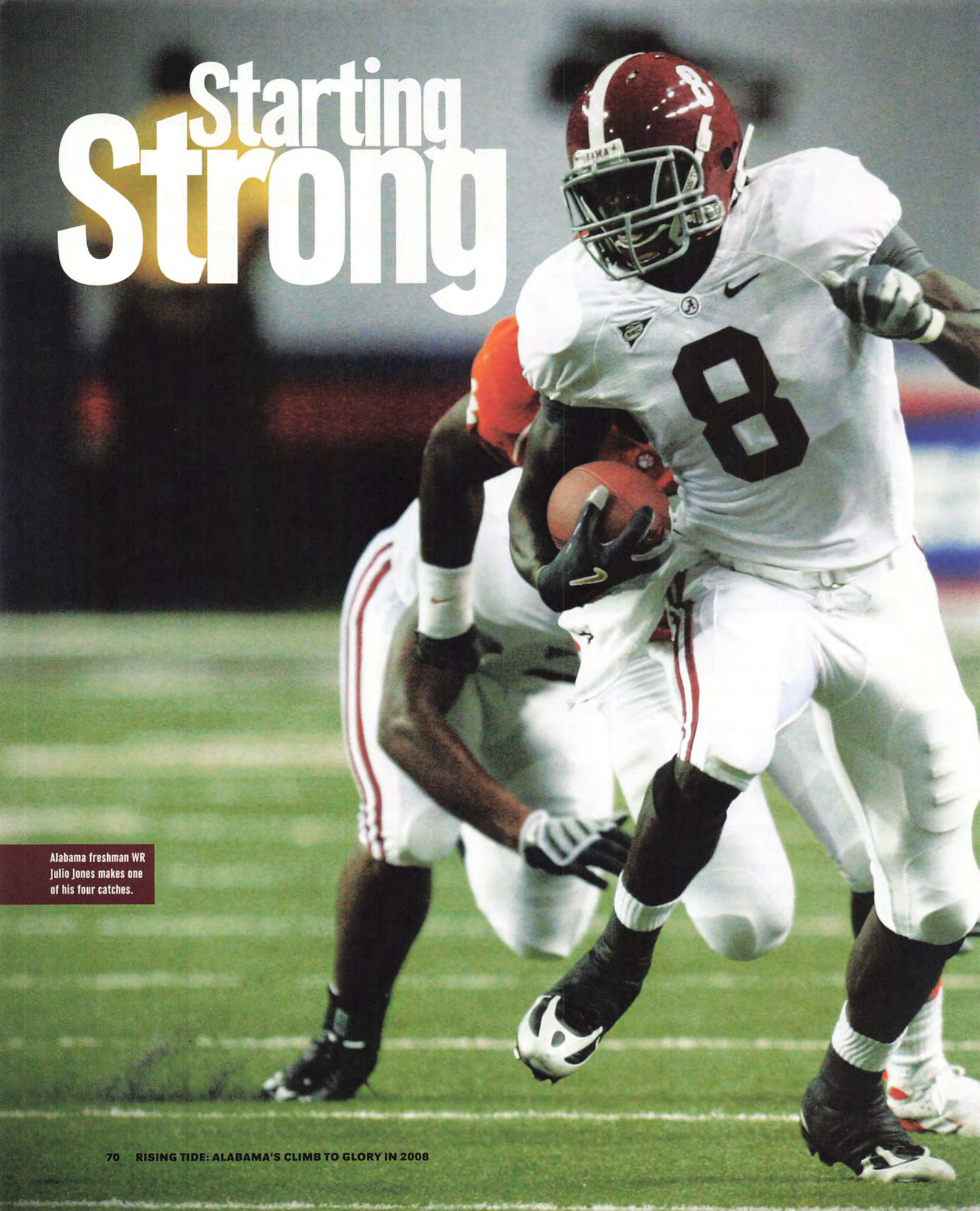
The Tulane team evacuated its New Orleans campus Aug. 30 as Gustav roared through the Gulf of Mexico toward a landfall. The squad spent a week in a hotel in Birmingham, alternately practicing at Samford University and watching movies and bowling to kill time.

Things could be worse next game: Tulane is supposed to play host to East Carolina on Saturday, and forecasters said Ike is on a path that could take it to southwestern Louisiana by the weekend.

The hurricane drill is getting old for Tulane. Two dozen players on the roster also evacuated when Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005, and a handful are left from 2004, when Hurricane Ivan forced the team to leave town.

Bad weather or not, Tulane has a tough time with Alabama. The Green Wave hasn't beaten the Crimson Tide since 1958, and it hasn't won in Tuscaloosa since 1900. **ALFB**

Starting Strong



Alabama freshman WR Julio Jones makes one of his four catches.

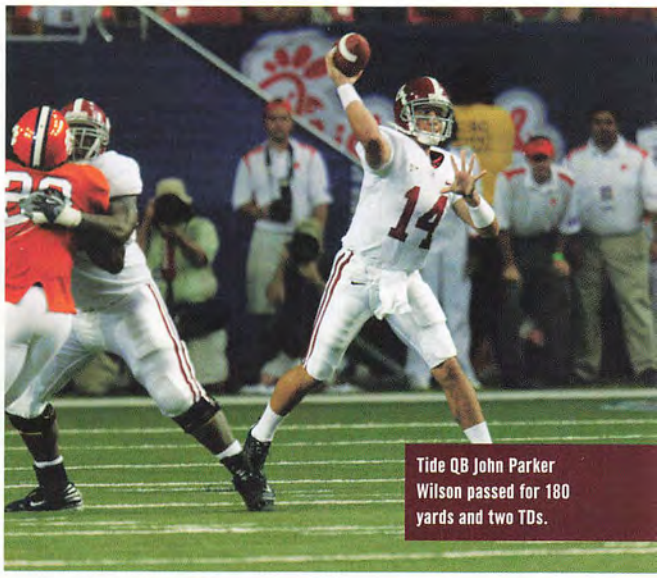
			SCORE BY QUARTERS				
ALABAMA	No.24	AUG 30	13	10	8	3	34
CLEMSON	No.9	GEORGIA DOME ATLANTA, GA.	0	3	7	0	10

Nick Saban may face his toughest task yet: Holding down runaway expectations for his inexperienced Alabama team.

Crimson Tide's $4 million-per-year coach gave Alabama backers a reason to think big Saturday night, leading 'Bama to thorough 34-10 beating of No. 9 Clemson 34-10 at the Georgia Dome.

"Nobody can be satisfied with a one-game performance," Saban said. "This will be a challenge for our team and it'll be interesting to see how they respond."

Still, as the Alabama band broke into Queen's "We Are The Champions," at the end, you had to wonder if they were honoring the Crimson Tide's past, with 12 national titles and years of dominance in the Southeastern Conference under Bear Bryant, or gazing into the near future.



Tide QB John Parker Wilson passed for 180 yards and two TDs.

"It's still early. We still got a long way to go," cautioned quarterback John Parker Wilson, who threw for two touchdowns and ran for a third. "But we've got a good group of guys here who can do it."

Especially if the Tide play like this. Alabama's defense held Clemson

Alabama freshman RB Mark Ingram breaks into the Clemson secondary.

enced bunch who entered the season with higher hopes than just their first Atlantic Coast Conference championship in 17 years.

Right from the start, though, Alabama showed it matched up fine with the ACC's favorite.

The Tide ran the ball easily on Clemson's defense, which was ninth in the country a season ago. At one point, Alabama had outgained the Tigers 114-1. By the time, tight end Nick Walker had slipped behind three defenders for a 4-yard TD catch, Alabama was ahead 20-3 midway through the second quarter.

Just for good measure, Jones collected his first college TD pass, a 4-yarder from Wilson that put Alabama up 31-10.

to zero rushing yards to help bat a top-10 opponent for the first time since topping No. 5 Florida in 2005. That was part of the last hurrah for former coach Mike Shula, who followed that 10-2 season with a 6-7 campaign that ended his time with the Tide.

Alabama lured Saban from the NFL last season to lead the 12-time national champs back to glory. Based on the opener, Saban and the Tide are on their way.

Saban hopes his players understand how far they have to go.

Wilson finished 22-of-30 for 180 yards and, with his career total completions now at 500, surpassed Brodie Croyle's old record of 488.

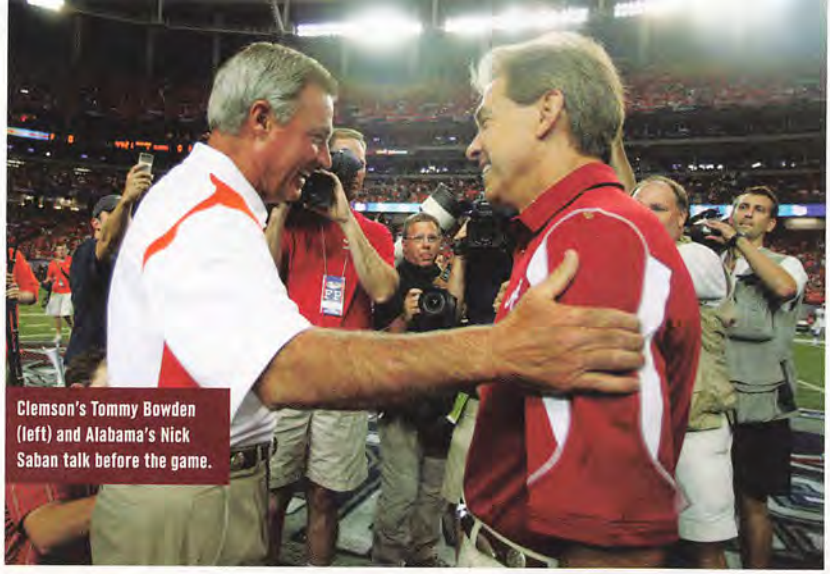
"I think we got something special here," Wilson said.

The Crimson Tide defense held the Tigers' heralded "Thunder and Lightning" backfield of James Davis and C.J. Spiller to 20 yards combined.

The Tigers managed only 188 yards, way off their 403-yard average from last season.

Saban's latest recruiting class included such high-profile prospects as receiver Julio Jones, an Internet sensation who fans have buzzed about for months. Still, Alabama didn't figure to hang with the Tigers, an experi-

Alabama DE Lorenzo Washington sacks Clemson QB Jamie Harper.



Clemson's Tommy Bowden (left) and Alabama's Nick Saban talk before the game.

BY THE NUMBERS

	ALA	CLE
YARDS RUSHING	239	0
Rushing Attempts	50	14
YARDS PASSING	180	188
Completions-Attempts	22-30	20-34
TOTAL YARDS	419	188
TURNOVERS	0	2
FIRST DOWNS	25	11
PENALTIES (YARDS)	6 (40)	6 (43)

SCORING SUMMARY

1st 09:43 UA - Leigh Tiffin 54 yd field goal
10 plays, 27 yards, TOP 5:17, UA 3 - CU 0
07:01 UA - Leigh Tiffin 21 yd field goal
6 plays, 27 yards, TOP 2:21, UA 6 - CU 0
02:51 UA - John Parker Wilson 1 yd run (Leigh Tiffin kick)
7 plays, 45 yards, TOP 2:24, UA 13 - CU 0
2nd 14:17 CU - Buchholz, M 33 yd field goal
8 plays, 56 yards, TOP 3:34, UA 13 - CU 3
06:01 UA - Nick Walker 4 yd pass from John Parker Wilson (Leigh Tiffin kick)
14 plays, 83 yards, TOP 8:16, UA 20 - CU 3
00:00 UA - Leigh Tiffin 34 yd field goal
8 plays, 48 yards, TOP 1:39, UA 23 - CU 3
3rd 14:48 CU - Spiller, C 96 yd kickoff return (Buchholz, M kick)
UA 23 - CU 10
04:08 UA - Julio Jones 4 yd pass from John Parker Wilson (Mark Ingram rush)
14 plays, 67 yards, TOP 6:52, UA 31 - CU 10
4th 03:39 UA - Leigh Tiffin 26 yd field goal
14 plays, 78 yards, TOP 8:54, UA 34 - CU 10

Leigh Tiffin added four field goals, including a 54-yard kick that was Alabama's third longest of all time.

Clemson quarterback Cullen Harper, voted the favorite to win ACC player of the year, was continually pressured and off target throughout.

The Tigers, down 23-3 at the half, got a burst of life when Spiller broke for a 96-yard kickoff return TD to start the second half, then forced the Tide into their first punt of the night a series later.

Clemson, though, could get little going.

"Maybe we needed a wake up call," Harper said. "We'll have to keep working hard this week and correct our mistakes."

So, for the second time in eight months, left the Georgia Dome with more questions and answers.

"We can't hang our heads down now," Clemson's Davis said.

That could be difficult since the Tigers just can't help but stumble whenever they close in on success.

They lost to a lightly regarded Maryland in 2006 at home, 13-12, when victory would've sent Clemson to the ACC title game.

Then last year, the Tigers were beaten 20-17 by Boston College in a showdown for a spot in the league's championship game.

Clemson concluded the season with a 23-20 overtime loss to Auburn in the Chick-fil-A Bowl, missing out on its first 10-victory season since 1991.

This was the year, many thought, that Clemson and embattled coach Tommy Bowden would shake off their reputations for not winning the biggest games. Alabama was where it was supposed to start.

Instead, Bowden again must refocus a team filled with veterans and leaders running out of time.

"We were whipped pretty bad," Bowden said.

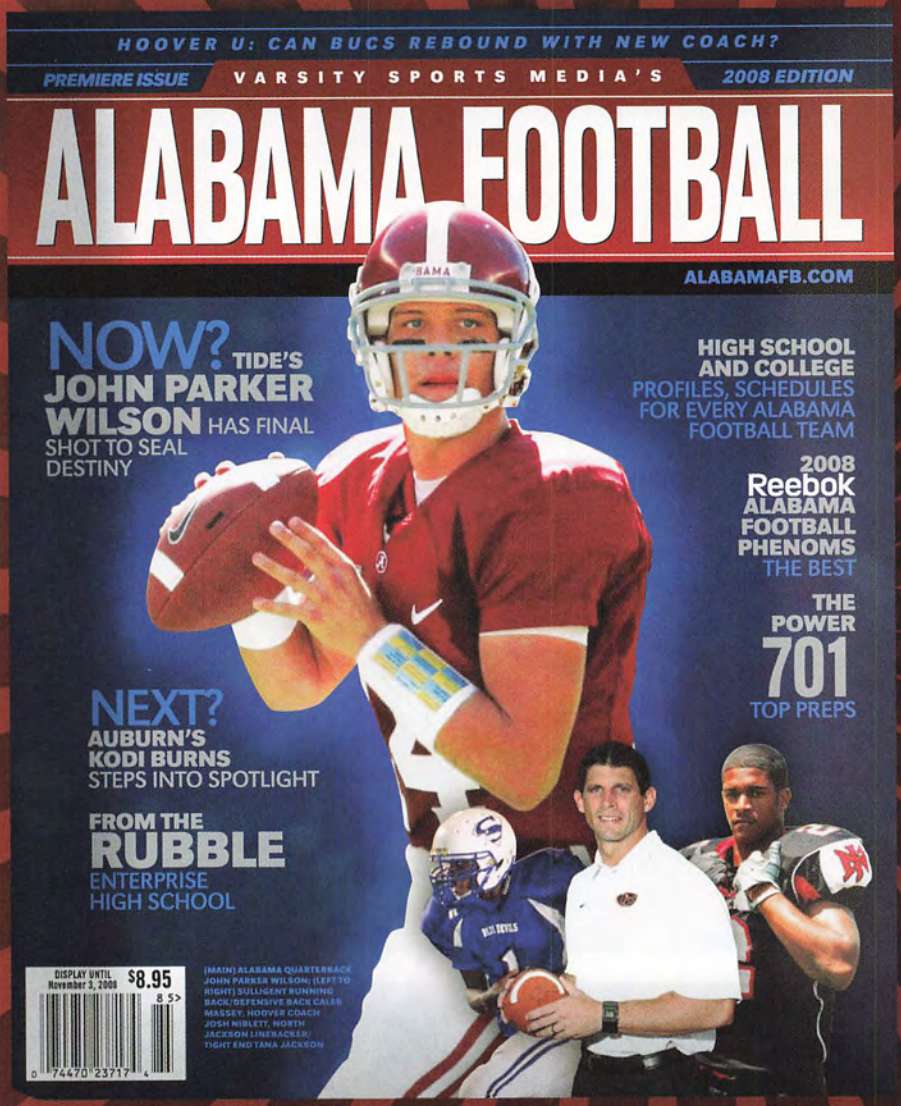
Clemson's loss also concluded a demoralizing day for the ACC. Earlier, defending league champion Virginia Tech fell to East Carolina, while Virginia was defeated at home by No. 3 Southern Cal 52-7.

The Crimson Tide have won 12 straight against Clemson, although the team's hadn't met since 1975 when the late Bryant laid a 56-0 humiliation on the Tigers.

Maybe Alabama and Saban will soon have more in common with the Bear's championship teams. **ALFB**

Tide RB Mark Ingram piled up 96 rushing yards vs. the Tigers.

INGRAM



JULY 2009

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OVERALL INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING	GP-GS	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
Glen Coffee	13-13	220	1377	30	1,347	6.1	10	87	103.6
Mark Ingram	130	135	717	15	702	5.2	12	40	54.0
Roy Upchurch	100	58	351	1	350	6.0	4	62	35.0
Terry Grant	130	35	119	31	88	2.5	1	18	6.8
Jeramie Griffin	20	6	29	0	29	4.8	0	8	14.5
John Parker Wilson	13-13	60	160	135	25	0.4	5	20	1.9
Demetrius Goode	30	9	24	0	24	2.7	0	7	8.0
P.J. Fitzgerald	130	1	1	0	1	1.0	0	1	0.1
Marquis Maze	12-4	1	1	0	1	1.0	0	1	0.1
Team	*90*	*10*	*0*	*13*	*-13*	*-1.3*	*0*	*0*	*-1.4*
Total	*13*	*535*	*2779*	*225*	*2,554*	*4.8*	*32*	*87*	*196.5*
Opponents	*13*	*367*	*1323*	*298*	*1,025*	*2.8*	*4*	*62*	*78.8*

PASSING	GP-GS	Effic	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
John Parker Wilson	13-13	123.8	169-293-6	57.7	2096	9	64	161.2
Greg McElroy	60	178.5	8-11-1	72.7	123	1	34	20.5
Total	*13*	*125.8*	*177-304-7*	*58.2*	*2219*	*10*	*64*	*170.7*
Opponents	*13*	*101.6*	*219-426-15*	*51.4*	*2315*	*15*	*51*	*178.1*

RECEIVING	GP-GS	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
Julio Jones	13-13	51	847	16.6	4	64	65.2
Nick Walker	13-10	29	299	10.3	2	40	23.0
Mike McCoy	12-9	16	191	11.9	1	30	15.9
Glen Coffee	13-13	12	78	6.5	0	15	6.0
Marquis Maze	12-4	11	137	12.5	2	34	11.4
Roy Upchurch	100	9	101	11.2	0	29	10.1
Darius Hanks	70	8	88	11.0	0	18	12.6
Earl Alexander	110	7	116	16.6	0	27	10.5
Travis McCall	13-11	7	52	7.4	0	12	4.0
Brad Smelley	70	6	91	15.2	0	37	13.0
Mark Ingram	130	6	46	7.7	0	27	3.5
Nikita Stover	13-4	5	86	17.2	1	39	6.6
Terry Grant	130	4	36	9.0	0	22	2.8
Will Oakley	80	2	27	13.5	0	14	3.4
B.J. Scott	90	2	7	3.5	0	7	0.8
Jeramie Griffin	20	1	9	9.0	0	9	4.5
Preston Dial	11-1	1	8	8.0	0	8	0.7
Total	*13*	*177*	*2,219*	*12.5*	*10*	*64*	*170.7*
Opponents	*13*	*219*	*2,315*	*10.6*	*15*	*51*	*178.1*

PUNT RETURNS	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long
Javier Arenas	40	577	14.4	2	87
Marquis Maze	2	8	4.0	0	5
Julio Jones	2	11	5.5	0	10
Kareem Jackson	1	8	8.0	0	0
Mark Barron	1	1	1.0	0	1
Roy Upchurch	1	6	6.0	0	0
Marquis Johnson	1	0	0.0	0	0
Chris Rogers	0	17	0.0	1	17
Total	*48*	*628*	*13.1*	*3*	*87*
Opponents	*26*	*240*	*9.2*	*1*	*92*

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long
Rashad Johnson	5	125	25.0	2	54
Justin Woodall	4	99	24.8	1	74
Marquis Johnson	2	7	3.5	0	7
Kareem Jackson	1	5	5.0	0	5
Javier Arenas	1	63	63.0	1	63
Chris Rogers	1	-6	-6.0	0	0
Rolando McClain	1	12	12.0	0	12
Total	*15*	*305*	*20.3*	*4*	*74*
Opponents	*7*	*76*	*10.9*	*0*	*24*

KICK RETURNS	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long
Javier Arenas	21	480	22.9	0	41
Mike McCoy	5	60	12.0	0	23
Terry Grant	3	52	17.3	0	18
Mark Ingram	1	26	26.0	0	26
Team	1	0	0.0	0	0
Julio Jones	1	21	21.0	0	21
Marquis Maze	1	19	19.0	0	19
Travis McCall	1	9	9.0	0	9
Total	*34*	*667*	*19.6*	*0*	*41*
Opponents	*77*	*1,672*	*21.7*	*1*	*96*

FUMBLE RETURNS	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long
Dont'a Hightower	1	8	8.0	0	8
Kareem Jackson	1	-9	-9.0	0	0
Rolando McClain	1	4	4.0	1	4
Total	*3*	*3*	*1.0*	*1*	*8*
Opponents	*0*	*0*	*0.0*	*0*	*0*

SCORING	TD	FGs	Kick	Rush	Rcv	Pass	DXP	Saf	Points
Leigh Tiffin	0	19-26	44-45	00	0	00	0	0	101
Mark Ingram	12	00	00	1-1	0	00	0	0	74
Glen Coffee	10	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	60
John Parker Wilson	5	00	00	00	0	0-2	0	0	30
Julio Jones	4	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	24
Roy Upchurch	4	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	24
Javier Arenas	3	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	18
Nick Walker	2	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	12
Marquis Maze	2	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	12
Rashad Johnson	2	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	12
Rolando McClain	1	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	6
Terry Grant	1	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	6
Mike McCoy	1	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	6
Justin Woodall	1	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	6
Chris Rogers	1	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	6
Nikita Stover	1	00	00	00	0	00	0	0	6
Corey Smith	0	0-1	0-1	00	0	00	0	0	0
Team	*0*	*00*	*00*	*00*	*0*	*00*	*0*	*1*	*2*
Total	*50*	*19-27*	*44-46*	*1-1*	*0*	*0-2*	*0*	*1*	*405*
Opponents	*21*	*8-15*	*19-19*	*00*	*0*	*0-2*	*0*	*0*	*169*

TOTAL OFFENSE	GP	Plays	Rush	Pass	Total	Avg/G
John Parker Wilson	13	353	25	2096	2121	163.2
Glen Coffee	13	220	1347	0	1347	103.6
Mark Ingram	13	135	702	0	702	54.0
Roy Upchurch	10	58	350	0	350	35.0
Greg McElroy	6	11	0	123	123	20.5
Terry Grant	13	35	88	0	88	6.8
Jeramie Griffin	2	6	29	0	29	14.5
Demetrius Goode	3	9	24	0	24	8.0
P.J. Fitzgerald	13	1	1	0	1	0.1
Marquis Maze	12	1	1	0	1	0.1
Team	*9*	*10*	*-13*	*0*	*-13*	*-1.4*
Total	*13*	*839*	*2,554*	*2,219*	*4,773*	*367.2*
Opponents	*13*	*793*	*1,025*	*2,315*	*3,340*	*256.9*

FIELD GOALS	Made-Att	Pct	01-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-99	Long	Blkd
Leigh Tiffin	19-26	73.1	00	7-8	9-11	2-5	1-2	54	1
Corey Smith	0-1	0.0	00	00	0-1	00	00	0	0

PUNTING	No.	Yards	Avg	Long	TB	FC	I20	50+	Blkd
P.J. Fitzgerald	55	2261	41.1	56	4	15	14	3	0
Team	*2*	*33*	*16.5*	*20*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*2*
Total	*57*	*2,294*	*40.2*	*56*	*4*	*15*	*14*	*3*	*2*
Opponents	*88*	*3,511*	*39.9*	*57*	*4*	*12*	*18*	*10*	*2*

KICKOFFS	No.	Yards	Avg	TB	OB	Retn	Net	YdLn
Leigh Tiffin	71	4,541	64.0	2	0			
Andrew Friedman	5	291	58.2	0	0			
Corey Smith	2	116	58.0	0	1			
Heath Thomas	2	119	59.5	0	0			
Total	*80*	*5,067*	*63.3*	*2*	*1*	*21.7*	*41.9*	*28*
Opponents	*41*	*2,533*	*61.8*	*5*	*1*	*19.6*	*43.1*	*26*

ALL PURPOSE	GP	Rush	Rcv	PR	KR	IR	Total	Avg/G
Glen Coffee	13	1347	78	0	0	0	1,425	109.6
Javier Arenas	13	0	0	577	480	63	1,120	86.2
Julio Jones	13	0	847	11	21	0	879	67.6
Mark Ingram	13	702	46	0	26	0	774	59.5
Roy Upchurch	10	350	101	6	0	0	457	45.7
Nick Walker	13	0	299	0	0	0	299	23.0
Mike McCoy	12	0	191	0	60	0	251	20.9
Terry Grant	13	88	36	0	52	0	176	13.5
Marquis Maze	12	1	137	8	19	0	165	13.8
Rashad Johnson	13	0	0	0	0	125	125	9.6
Earl Alexander	11	0	116	0	0	0	116	10.5
Justin Woodall	13	0	0	0	0	99	99	7.6
Brad Smelley	7	0	91	0	0	0	91	13.0
Darius Hanks	7	0	88	0	0	0	88	12.6
Nikita Stover	13	0	86	0	0	0	86	6.6
Travis McCall	13	0	52	0	9	0	61	4.7
Jeramie Griffin	2	29	9	0	0	0	38	19.0
Will Oakley	8	0	27	0	0	0	27	3.4
John Parker Wilson	13	25	0	0	0	0	25	1.9
Demetrius Goode	3	24	0	0	0	0	24	8.0
Kareem Jackson	13	0	0	8	0	5	13	1.0
Rolando McClain	13	0	0	0	0	12	12	0.9
Chris Rogers	13	0	0	17	0	-6	11	0.8
Preston Dial	11	0	8	0	0	0	8	0.7
B.J. Scott	9	0	7	0	0	0	7	0.8
Marquis Johnson	13	0	0	0	0	7	7	0.5
Mark Barron	13	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.1
P.J. Fitzgerald	13	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Team	*9*	*-13*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*-13*	*-1.4*
Total	*13*	*2554*	*2219*	*628*	*667*	*305*	*6373*	*490.2*
Opponents	*13*	*1025*	*2315*	*240*	*1672*	*76*	*5328*	*409.8*

OVERALL TEAM STATISTICS

TEAM STATISTICS	UA	OPP
SCORING	405	169
Points Per Game	31.2	13.0
FIRST DOWNS	248	175
Rushing	128	57
Passing	104	103
Penalty	16	15
RUSHING YARDAGE	2554	1025
Yards gained rushing	2779	1323
Yards lost rushing	225	298
Rushing Attempts	535	367
Average Per Rush	4.8	2.8
Average Per Game	196.5	78.8
TDs Rushing	32	4
PASSING YARDAGE	2219	2315
Att-Comp-Int	304-177-7	426-219-15
Average Per Pass	7.3	5.4
Average Per Catch	12.5	10.6
Average Per Game	170.7	178.1
TDs Passing	10	15
TOTAL OFFENSE	4773	3340
Total Plays	839	793
Average Per Play	5.7	4.2
Average Per Game	367.2	256.9
KICK RETURNS: #-Yards	34-667	77-1672
PUNT RETURNS: #-Yards	48-628	26-240
INT RETURNS: #-Yards	15-305	7-76
KICK RETURN AVERAGE	19.6	21.7
PUNT RETURN AVERAGE	13.1	9.2

TEAM STATISTICS	UA	OPP
INT RETURN AVERAGE	20.3	10.9
FUMBLES-LOST	18-9	17-9
PENALTIES-Yards	50-453	77-575
Average Per Game	34.8	44.2
PUNTS-Yards	57-2294	88-3511
Average Per Punt	40.2	39.9
Net punt average	34.6	31.9
TIME OF POSSESSION/Game	32:11	27:49
3RD-DOWN Conversions	72/170	50/185
3rd-Down Pct	42%	27%
4TH-DOWN Conversions	8/10	10/20
4th-Down Pct	80%	50%
SACKS BY-Yards	24-179	17-125
MISC YARDS	0	-11
TOUCHDOWNS SCORED	50	21
FIELD GOALS-ATTEMPTS	19-27	8-15
ON-SIDE KICKS	00	1-2
RED-ZONE SCORES	45-53 (85%)	18-22 (82%)
RED-ZONE TOUCHDOWNS	30-53 (57%)	11-22 (50%)
PAT-ATTEMPTS	44-46 (96%)	19-19 (100%)

ATTENDANCE	644,966	364,238
Games/Avg Per Game	7/92,138	4/91,060
Neutral Site Games	2/72,994	

SCORE BY QUARTERS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
Alabama	133	111	101	54	6	405
Opponents	27	37	31	74	0	169

OVERALL DEFENSIVE STATISTICS

			Tackles				Sacks	Pass Defense				Fumbles				
DEFENSIVE LEADERS		GP-GS	Solo	Ast	Total	TFL-Yds	No-Yds	Int-Yds	BU	PD	Qbh	Rcv-Yds	FF	Blkd Kick	Saf	
25	Rolando McClain	13-13	45	46	91	11.0-44	3.0-22	1-12	5	6	2	2-4				
49	Rashad Johnson	13-13	55	27	82	5.0-15	1.0-7	5-125	11	16		1-0	1			
98	Brandon Fanney	13-13	25	39	64	9.0-19	1.0-5		1	1	3	1	0			
30	Dont'a Hightower	13-12	25	37	62	2.5-6					5	2-8	1			
28	Javier Arenas	13-13	40	18	58	3.5-24	2.0-21	1-63	7	8	4					
27	Justin Woodall	13-13	31	14	45	1.5-4		4-99	7	11			2			
3	Kareem Jackson	13-13	26	15	41	1.0-4		1-5	10	11		1--9		1		
24	Marquis Johnson	13-2	25	15	40	1.0-4		2-7	5	7	1					
93	Bobby Greenwood	13-13	14	21	35	5.0-24	4.0-23		1	1	7			1		
13	Cory Reamer	13-11	16	19	35	6.0-16	1.0-8				1		1			
95	Brandon Deaderick	13-13	13	22	35	5.5-25	4.0-24				7					
26	Ali Sharrief	13-1	16	11	27	2.5-7			5	5	4					
62	Terrence Cody	11-11	7	16	23	4.5-14	0.5-5				2	2-0	1			
41	Courtney Upshaw	12-0	11	10	21	2.0-2			2	2	1					
32	Eryk Anders	13-0	11	9	20	3.5-24	2.5-22		1	1	7		1			
21	Prince Hall	11-0	7	10	17	2.0-5	0.5-4				1		1			
4A	Mark Barron	13-0	8	9	17	1.5-11	1.5-11									
1H	Josh Chapman	13-2	9	7	16	4.0-7					1					
20	Tyrone King	13-0	11	4	15						1		2			
8A	Chris Rogers	13-0	10	3	13			1--6		1						
1F	Lorenzo Washington	13-0	3	10	13	2.5-12	1.0-10				5					
96	Luther Davis	13-0	6	6	12	2.5-4					1					
99	Leigh Tiffin	13-0	3	3	6											
19	Chris Jackson	12-0	1	5	6											
23	Robby Green	11-0	3	2	5											
57	Marcell Dareus	7-0	1	3	4						3					
45	Charlie Higgenbotham	13-0	2	2	4	1.0-8	1.0-8									
5A	Jerrell Harris	9-0	1	2	3											
5	Roy Upchurch	10-0		3	3									1		
29	Terry Grant	13-0	2	1	3											
36	Chris Jordan	9-0		3	3											
8	Julio Jones	13-13	2	2												
90	Milton Talbert	4-0	1	1	2											
83	Travis McCall	13-11	2		2											
97	P.J. Fitzgerald	13-0	2		2											
78	Mike Johnson	13-13	1		1											
4	Marquis Maze	12-4	1		1											
88	Nick Walker	13-10	1		1											
55	Chavis Williams	5-0	1		1	1.0-9	1.0-9				1					
38	Glen Coffee	13-13		1	1											
58	Nick Gentry	9-0									1					
	Team	9-0														1
Total		*130*	*438*	*394*	*832*	*78-288*	*24-179*	*15-305*		*55*	*70*	*58*	*9-3*	*10*	*3*	*1*
	Opponents	*130*	*458*	*524*	*982*	*49-207*	*17-125*	*7-76*	*35*	*42*	*41*	*8*	*0*	*10*	*4*	

Past meets present

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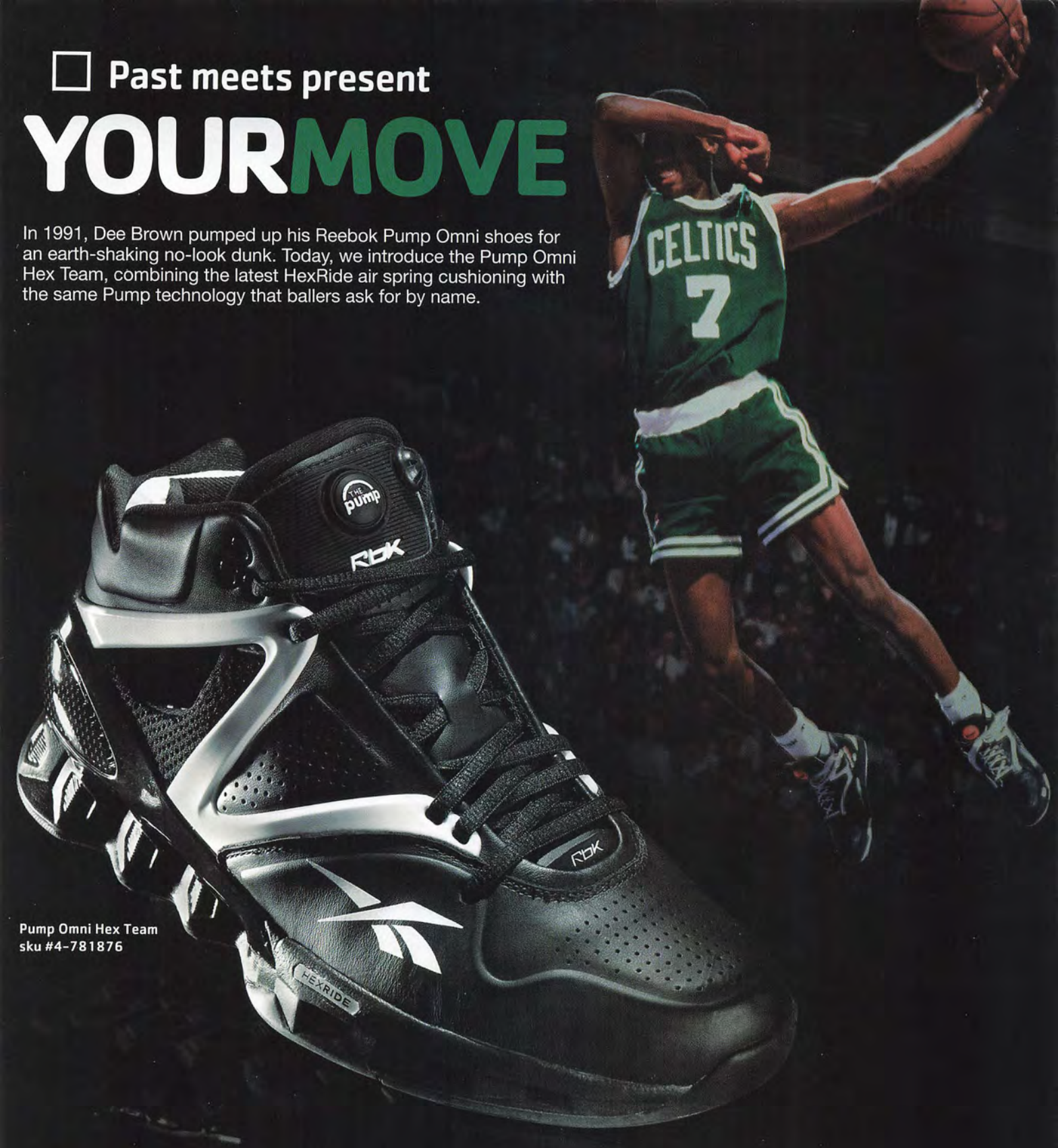

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WASSON SAYS

From my unique perch watching the University of Alabama football program for the better part of a decade, I have seen some things.

Mike DuBose endured a scandalous affair, won an SEC championship and lost to Central Florida on homecoming – the final indignity costing him his job.

The NCAA pointed its gun at the Crimson Tide, massaged the trigger, and eventually delivered a near-mortal wound of scholarship reductions and on-field probation that arguably set the program back a decade.

Dennis Franchione got off a jet from Hawaii, then onto one in the darkness bound for College Station, Texas – abandoning the rope he asked his players to hold onto while the program was listing against sanctions and uncertainty.

Mike Price came sweeping in from Washington, went out one night during a Florida golf trip, and was gone the next week – leaving behind a torrid national scandal that managed to heap more embarrassment on an Alabama program that was already one foot in the grave.

Mike Shula came next, a breath of clean air that cleaned up much of the mess and took the Tide to the Cotton Bowl – but couldn't get it done against Auburn.

That brings us to now.

Nick Saban.

Almost two years ago, Saban was second-guessing his decision to leave LSU for the luster and lucre of the NFL. He wasn't a good fit with the Miami Dolphins, favored recruiting and the development of young men over salary caps and recalcitrant superstars – and wanted out.

Enter Alabama.

Two years later, through early prickly jabs with national media and a 7-6 start that was as much about weeding out the problem children as it was on-field inconsistency, through Offensive Coordinator 2.0 and the best recruiting class in Crimson Tide history ... here we are.

No one, and I mean no one, saw what happened to Alabama in 2008 coming. Not Nick Saban. Not his coaching staff. Not his crazy-young team with its mere handful of seniors. Not the media. Not even the folks in the Crimson Nation in charge of mixing that Kool-Aid.

No one saw a perfect regular season.

No one saw defensive dominance.

No one saw a laughably aggressive offense that toyed with defenses in the second halves of games.

No one saw beat downs – and subsequent coaching firings – of Tennessee, Mississippi State and Auburn.

No one saw 36-0.

No one saw a trip to Atlanta for the SEC Championship Game.

No one saw No. 1.

But we all see it now. We all see why Alabama AD Mal Moore cracked open the piggy bank to heap $4 million per year upon Saban. Because, for the first time since a man draped in houndstooth prowled the Crimson Tide sidelines, Alabama is, well, Alabama again.

Gone is wondering when the Tide will kick a field goal once it gets in the red zone. Gone is holding your breath when Saban decides to go for it on fourth down around midfield. Gone is worrying about defensive backs getting torched or defensive linemen getting lit up. Gone are desperate heaves into the end zone after a turnover – instead of just sticking to the plan and running it down your throats.

Gone is the lack of control. In its place is a quiet confidence. Punch you in the mouth, pick you up, and punch you in the mouth again.

So much has changed for the Alabama Nation. The successes finally outweigh the failures – by a landslide. **ALFB**

David Wasson is managing editor of Alabama Football Magazine *and* AlabamaFB.com.

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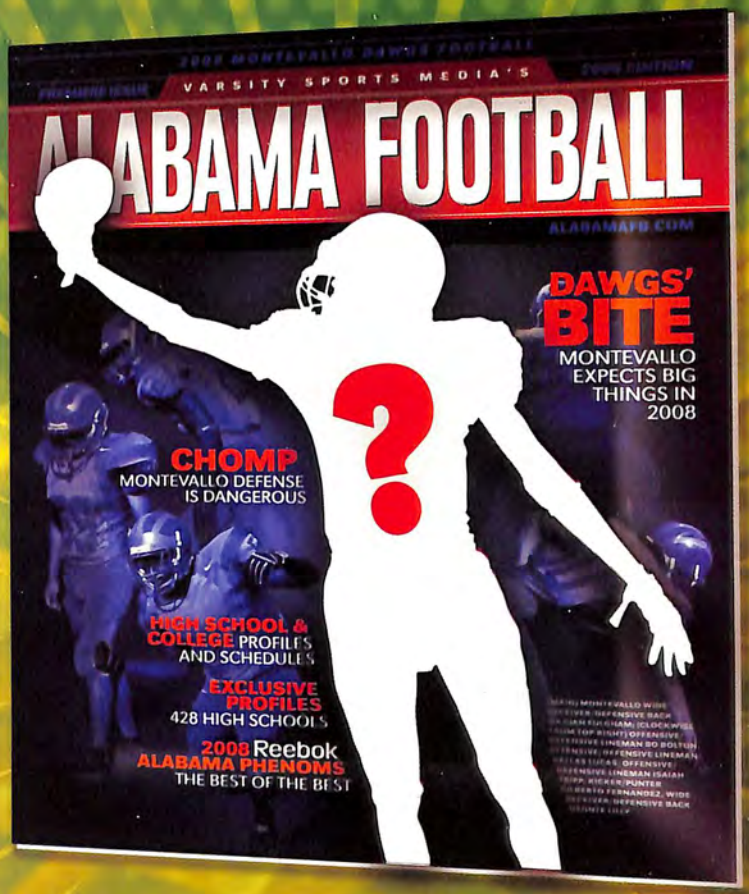

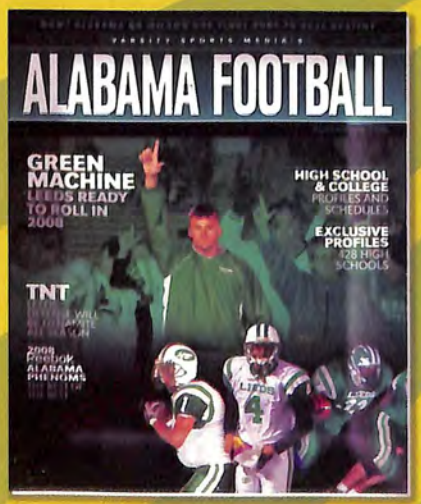

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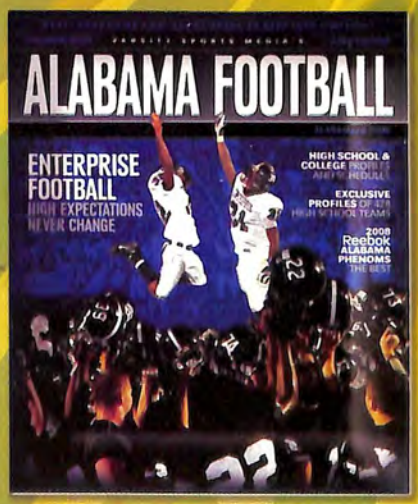

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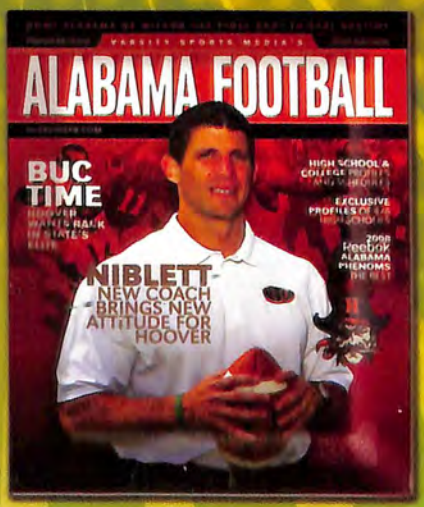

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